
SOME THING ABOUT CATS

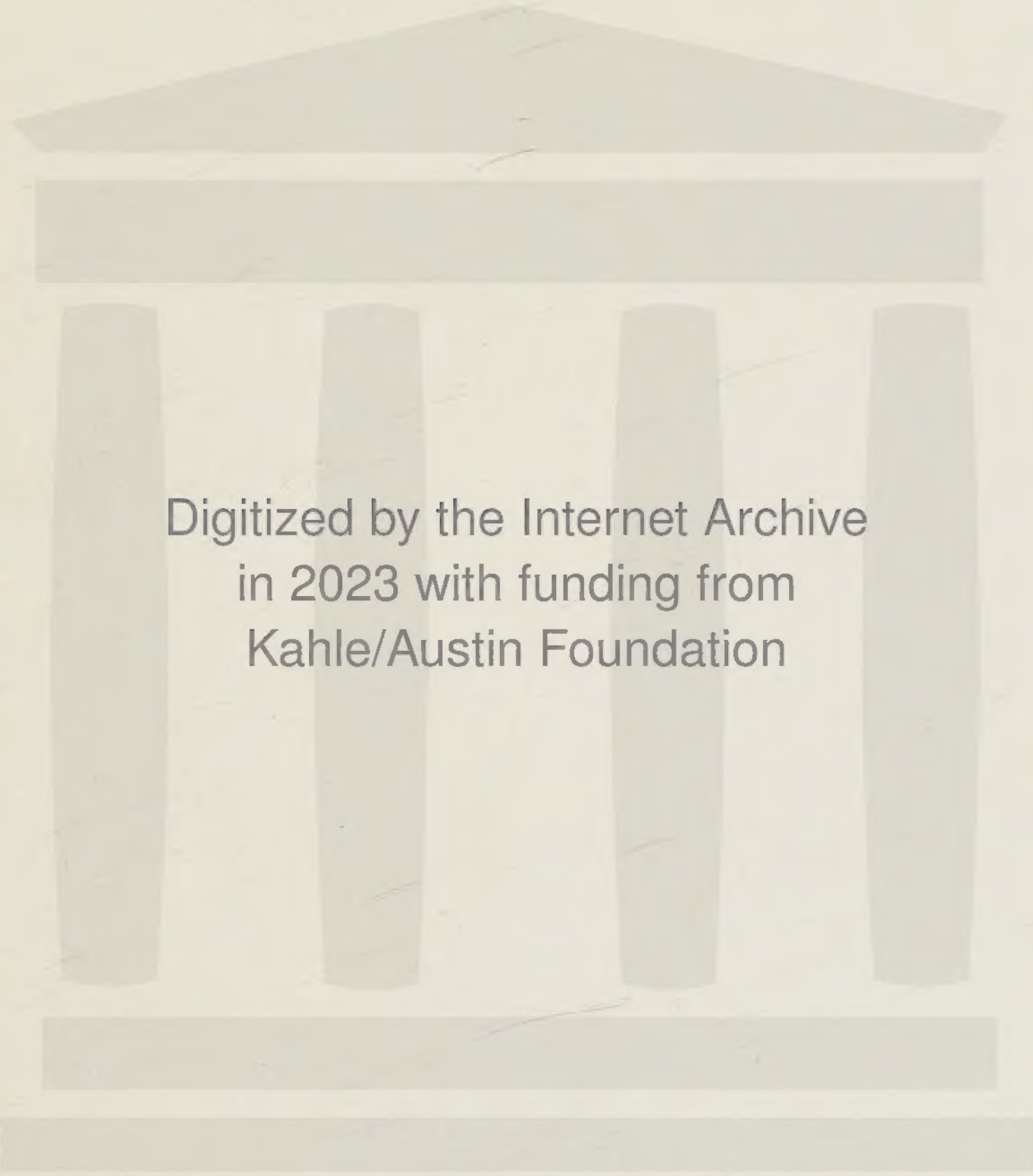


AND OTHER PIECES
BY H. P. LOVECRAFT

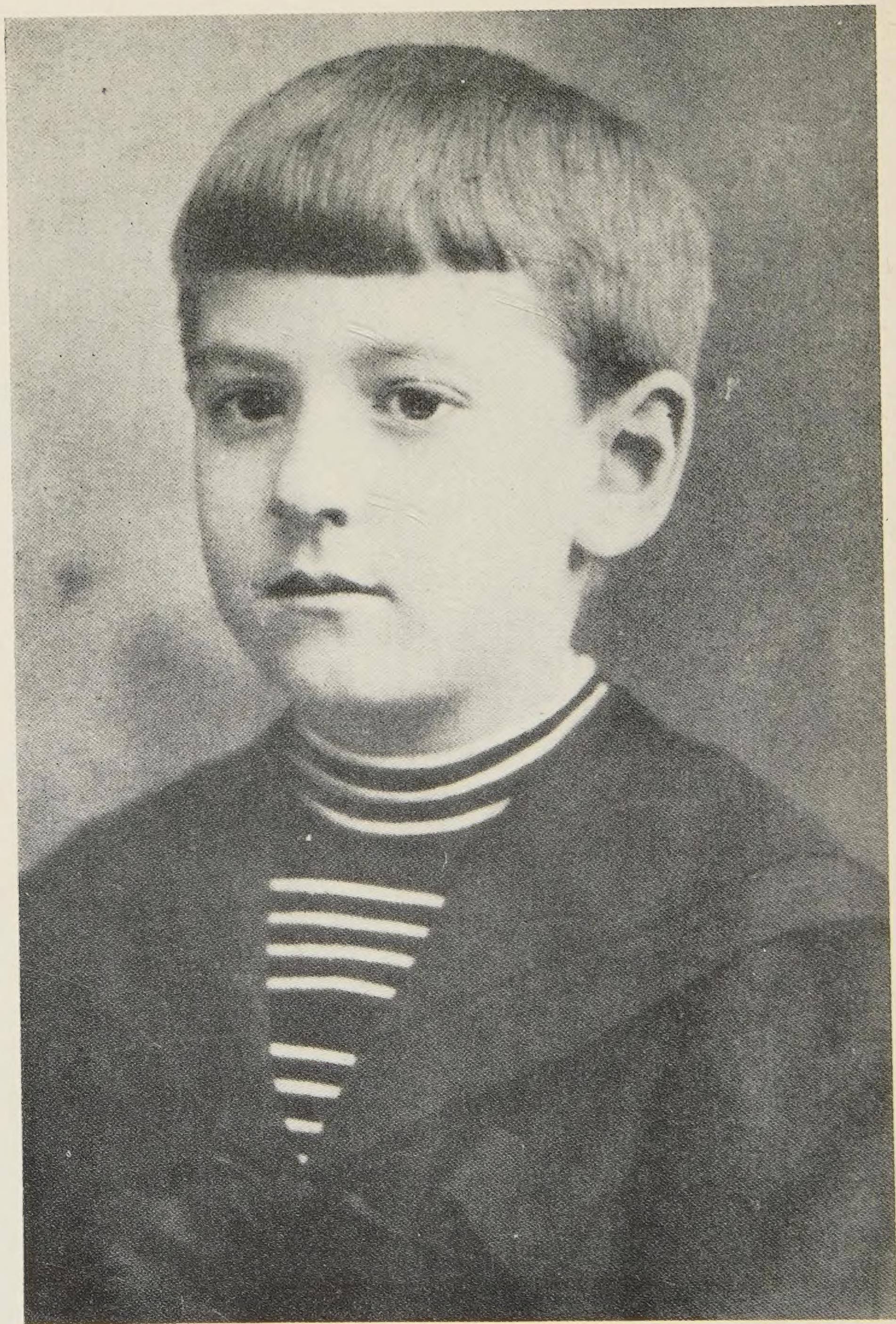
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*Something About Cats
and Other Pieces*

By H. P. LOVECRAFT



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H. P. Lovecraft as a boy.

H. P. LOVECRAFT

SOMETHING ABOUT CATS AND OTHER PIECES

Collected by
AUGUST DERLETH



1949
ARKHAM HOUSE
SAUK CITY, WISCONSIN

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BY AUGUST DERLETH

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A Prefatory Note

IT IS UNLIKELY that there will ever be another compilation of uncollected writings by the late Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), apart from the forthcoming *Selected Letters*, for in the present volume various hitherto uncollected odds and ends, essays, revisions, notes, and poems have been gathered together, supplementing the longer and generally more significant prose work collected in *Marginalia* (Arkham House: 1944), and the rather important, in genre, short stories and short novels previously published.

The title essay was the result of a friendly argument about the virtues of cats as against those of dogs, Lovecraft taking the side of the felidae with delight and enthusiasm. It grew out of a discussion at a meeting of the Kalem Klub and was carried into a Blue Pencil gathering, from which it went on to become the amusing and scholarly little piece here presented. It is perhaps the most significant essay in this book, the others being distinctly lesser pieces from Lovecraft's own amateur magazine, *The Conservative*, and from certain other similar sources. The role that Lovecraft played in the writing of *The Battle That Ended the Century* cannot apparently be precisely determined; but that he had a part in it seems certain, and it is included in this collection as a possible Lovecraftian item.

The five revisions which make up the core of this collection are typical examples of Lovecraft's working methods. His touch was lightest in the stories by Sonia H. Greene, who was later to become his wife; he made some alterations in *The Invisible Monster*, he made only suggestions for the prose style of *Four O'Clock*. The stories by Hazel Heald and Dr. Adolphe de Castro were originally plotted and written by Miss Heald and Dr. de Castro, and turned over to Lovecraft for suggestions toward revision, a task into which Lovecraft entered with pleasure, since it is manifest that he enjoyed the plots thus put before him, and his touch is everywhere evident in the stories themselves.

The poems here included are minor pieces which for the most part

were not at hand for inclusion in the previous collections of his work. Though no comprehensive examination of the files of the amateur press publications for future work by Lovecraft under one or more of his pen-names has been made, it is not probable that enough verse worthy of reprint could be uncovered in those pages. The majority of the Lovecraft poems published in the amateur magazines consisted of verses in the manner of the eighteenth century, and might have been written by any competent versifier.

The notes for the three long stories—*The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, and *The Shadow Out of Time*, together with the discarded draft of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*—are here included to add their bit to our knowledge of Lovecraft's working methods, already exemplified in the *Commonplace Book* and other notes. These pages were carefully photographed by R. H. Barlow, and in part transcribed by him; then enlarged from microfilm by H. C. Koenig, and transcribed by Miss Alice Conger at Arkham House, save for such unintelligible words or phrases as were encountered.

To the Lovecraft works in this book have been added certain appreciations, some of them wholly or in part previously published. Reinhart Kleiner wrote his memoir at our suggestion, specifically for *The Arkham Sampler* and this book; so too did Samuel Loveman. Mr. Kleiner has gone now, thus narrowing still more the old Lovecraft circle. Mrs. Davis's memoir first appeared in *The Providence Journal's* literary pages, sponsored by literary editor Winfield Townley Scott, whose appreciation of Lovecraft appeared in *Marginalia*. The addenda to *H. P. L.: A Memoir* suggest that that biography of Lovecraft will ultimately be expanded and rewritten, and the present papers will be incorporated into that revision. Both the Price and Leiber monographs initially appeared in *The Acolyte*, one of the best of the fan magazines, edited by Francis T. Laney, though the here published versions represent considerable revision and expansion of the originals. Finally, Mr. Starrett's poem was written especially for this collection.

Something About Cats and Other Pieces is primarily a volume for the collector who insists upon comprehensiveness. Apart from the interesting

revisions and the title essay, it contains nothing of particular significance from the pen of the late H. P. Lovecraft, and one suspects that Lovecraft himself would have looked askance at any plan to republish the bulk of the work assembled here. But it has been republished solely to lend its weight, such as it is, to the rounded picture of the man Lovecraft was, and the reader will assess these pieces in their proper perspective, seen against the body of Lovecraft's work.

—AUGUST DERLETH

*Something About Cats
and Other Pieces*

*Something About Cats**

BEING TOLD of the cat-and-dog fight about to occur in your literary club, I cannot resist contributing a few Thomastic yowls and sibilants upon my side of the dispute, though conscious that the word of a venerable ex-member can scarcely have much weight against the brilliancy of such still active adherents as may bark upon the other side. Aware of my ineptitude at argument, a valued correspondent has supplied me with the records of a similar controversy in the *New York Tribune*, in which Mr. Carl van Doren is on my side and Mr. Albert Payson Terhune on that of the canine tribe. From this I would be glad to plagiarise such data as I need; but my friend, with genuinely Machiavellian subtlety, has furnished me with only a part of the feline section whilst submitting the doggish brief in full. No doubt he imagines that this arrangement, in view of my own emphatic bias, makes for something like ultimate fairness; but for me it is exceedingly inconvenient, since it will force me to be more or less original in several parts of the ensuing remarks.

Between dogs and cats my degree of choice is so great that it would never occur to me to compare the two. I have no active dislike for dogs, any more than I have for monkeys, human beings, tradesmen, cows, sheep, or pterodactyls; but for the cat I have entertained a particular respect and affection ever since the earliest days of my infancy. In its flawless grace and superior self-sufficiency I have seen a symbol of the perfect beauty and bland impersonality of the universe itself, objectively considered, and in its air of silent mystery there resides for me all the wonder and fascination of the unknown. The dog appeals to cheap and facile emotions; the cat to the deepest founts of imagination and cosmic perception in the human mind. It is no accident that the contemplative Egyptians, together with such later poetic spirits as Poe,

* This first appeared as *Cats and Dogs* over the byline of Lewis Theobald, Jun., a pseudonym of H. P. Lovecraft, in *Leaves*, Summer 1937.

Gautier, Baudelaire and Swinburne, were all sincere worshippers of the supple grimalkin.

Naturally, one's preference in the matter of cats and dogs depends wholly upon one's temperament and point of view. The dog would appear to me to be the favorite of superficial, sentimental, and emotional people—people who feel rather than think, who attach importance to mankind and the popular conventional emotions of the simple, and who find their greatest consolation in the fawning and dependent attachments of a gregarious society. Such people live in a limited world of imagination; accepting uncritically the values of common folklore, and always preferring to have their naive beliefs, feelings, and prejudices tickled, rather than to enjoy a purely aesthetic and philosophic pleasure arising from discrimination, contemplation, and the recognition of austere absolute beauty. This is not to say that the cheaper elements do not also reside in the average cat-lover's love of cats, but merely to point out that in ailurophily there exists a basis of true aestheticism which kynophily does not possess. The real lover of cats is one who demands a clearer adjustment to the universe than ordinary household platitudes provide; one who refuses to swallow the sentimental notion that all good people love dogs, children, and horses while all bad people dislike and are disliked by such. He is unwilling to set up himself and his cruder feelings as a measure of universal values, or to allow shallow ethical notions to warp his judgment. In a word, he had rather admire and respect than effuse and dote; and does not fall into the fallacy that pointless sociability and friendliness, or slavering devotion and obedience, constitute anything intrinsically admirable or exalted. Dog-lovers base their whole case on these commonplace, servile, and plebeian qualities, and amusingly judge the intelligence of a pet by its degree of conformity to their own wishes. Cat-lovers escape this delusion, repudiate the idea that cringing subservience and sidling companionship to man are supreme merits, and stand free to worship aristocratic independence, self-respect, and individual personality joined to extreme grace and beauty as typified by the cool, lithe, cynical and unconquered lord of the housetops.

Persons of commonplace ideas—unimaginative worthy burghers who are satisfied with the daily round of things and who subscribe to the popular credo of sentimental values—will always be dog-lovers. To them nothing will ever be more important than themselves and their own more primitive feelings, and they will never cease to esteem and glorify the fellow-animal who best typifies these. Such persons are submerged in the vortex of Oriental idealism and abasement which ruined classic civilisation in the Dark Ages, and live in a bleak world of abstract sentimental values wherein the mawkish illusions of meekness, devotion, gentleness, brotherhood, and whining humility are magnified into supreme virtues, and a whole false ethic and philosophy erected on the timid reactions of the flexor system of muscles. This heritage, ironically foisted on us when Roman politics raised the faith of a whipped and broken people to supremacy in the later empire, has naturally kept a strong hold over the weak and sentimentally thoughtless; and perhaps reached its culmination in the insipid nineteenth century, when people were wont to praise dogs "because they are so human" (as if humanity were any valid standard of merit!), and honest Edwin Landseer painted hundreds of smug Fidoes and Carlos and Rovers with all the anthropoid triviality, pettiness, and "cuteness" of eminent Victorians.

But amidst this chaos of intellectual and emotional grovelling a few free souls have always stood out for the old civilised realities which mediaevalism eclipsed—the stern classic loyalty to truth, strength, and beauty given by a clear mind and uncowed spirit to the full-living Western Aryan confronted by Nature's majesty, loveliness, and aloofness. This is the virile aesthetic and ethic of the extensor muscles—the bold, buoyant, assertive beliefs and preferences of proud, dominant, unbroken and unterrified conquerors, hunters, and warriors—and it has small use for the shams and whimperings of the brotherly, affection-slobbering peacemaker and cringer and sentimentalist. Beauty and sufficiency—twin qualities of the cosmos itself—are the gods of this unshackled and pagan type; to the worshipper of such eternal things the supreme virtue will not be found in lowliness, attachment, obedience, and emotional

messiness. This sort of worshipper will look for that which best embodies the loveliness of the stars and the worlds and the forests and the seas and the sunsets, and which best acts out the blandness, lordliness, accuracy, self-sufficiency, cruelty, independence, and contemptuous and capricious impersonality of all governing Nature. Beauty—coolness—aloofness—philosophic repose—self-sufficiency—untamed mastery—where else can we find these things incarnated with even half the perfection and completeness that mark their incarnation in the peerless and softly gliding cat, which performs its mysterious orbit with the relentless and unobtrusive certainty of a planet in infinity?

That dogs are dear to the unimaginative peasant-burgher whilst cats appeal to the sensitive poet-aristocrat-philosopher will be clear in a moment when we reflect on the matter of biological association. Practical plebeian folk judge a thing only by its immediate touch, taste, and smell; while more delicate types form their estimates from the linked images and ideas which the object calls up in their minds. Now when dogs and cats are considered, the stolid churl sees only the two animals before him, and bases his favour on their relative capacity to pander to his sloppy, unformed ideas of ethics and friendship and flattering subservience. On the other hand the gentleman and thinker sees each in all its natural affiliations, and cannot fail to notice that in the great symmetries of organic life dogs fall in with slovenly wolves and foxes and jackals and coyotes and dingoes and painted hyaenas, whilst cats walk proudly with the jungle's lords, and own the haughty lion, the sinuous leopard, the regal tiger, and the shapely panther and jaguar as their kin. Dogs are the hieroglyphs of blind emotion, inferiority, servile attachment, and gregariousness—the attributes of commonplace, stupidly passionate, and intellectually and imaginatively undeveloped men. Cats are the runes of beauty, invincibility, wonder, pride, freedom, coldness, self-sufficiency, and dainty individuality—the qualities of sensitive, enlightened, mentally developed, pagan, cynical, poetic, philosophic, dispassionate, reserved, independent, Nietzschean, unbroken, civilised, master-class men. The dog is a peasant and the cat is a gentleman.

We may, indeed, judge the tone and bias of a civilisation by its

relative attitude toward dogs and cats. The proud Egypt wherein Pharaoh was Pharaoh and pyramids rose in beauty at the wish of him who dreamed them bowed down to the cat, and temples were builded to its goddess at Bubastis. In imperial Rome the graceful leopard adorned most homes of quality, lounging in insolent beauty in the atrium with golden collar and chain; while after the age of the Antonines the actual cat was imported from Egypt and cherished as a rare and costly luxury. So much for dominant and enlightened peoples. When, however, we come to the grovelling Middle Ages with their superstitions and ecstasies and monasticisms and maunderings over saints and their relics, we find the cool and impersonal loveliness of the felidae in very low esteem; and behold a sorry spectacle of hatred and cruelty shown toward the beautiful little creature whose mousing virtues alone gained it sufferance amongst the ignorant churls who resented its self-respecting coolness and feared its cryptical and elusive independence as something akin to the dark powers of witchcraft. These boorish slaves of eastern darkness could not tolerate what did not serve their own cheap emotions and flimsy purposes. They wished a dog to fawn and hunt and fetch and carry, and had no use for the cat's gift of eternal and disinterested beauty to feed the spirit. One can imagine how they must have resented Pussy's magnificent reposefulness, unhurriedness, relaxation, and scorn for trivial human aims and concerns. Throw a stick, and the servile dog wheezes and pants and stumbles to bring it to you. Do the same before a cat, and he will eye you with coolly polite and somewhat bored amusement. And just as inferior people prefer the inferior animal which scampers excitedly because somebody else wants something, so do superior people respect the superior animal which lives its own life and knows that the puerile stick-throwings of alien bipeds are none of its business and beneath its notice. The dog barks and begs and tumbles to amuse you when you crack the whip. That pleases a meekness-loving peasant who relishes a stimulus to his sense of importance. The cat, on the other hand, charms you into playing for its benefit when it wishes to be amused; making you rush about the room with a paper on a string when it feels like

exercise, but refusing all your attempts to make it play when it is not in the humour. That is personality and individuality and self-respect—the calm mastery of a being whose life is its own and not yours—and the superior person recognises and appreciates this because he too is a free soul whose position is assured, and whose only law is his own heritage and aesthetic sense. Altogether, we may see that the dog appeals to those primitive emotional souls whose chief demands on the universe are for meaningless affection, aimless companionship, and flattering attention and subservience; whilst the cat reigns among those more contemplative and imaginative spirits who ask of the universe only the objective sight of poignant, ethereal beauty and the animate symbolisation of Nature's bland, relentless, reposeful, unhurried and impersonal order and sufficiency. The dog *gives*, but the cat *is*.

Simple folk always overstress the ethical element in life, and it is quite natural that they should extend it to the realm of their pets. Accordingly we hear many inane dicta in favour of dogs on the ground that they are *faithful*, whilst cats are *treacherous*. Now just what does this really mean? Where are the points of reference? Certainly, the dog has so little imagination and individuality that it knows no motives but its master's; but what sophisticated mind can descry a positive virtue in this stupid abnegation of a birthright? Discrimination must surely award the palm to the superior cat, which has too much natural dignity to accept any scheme of things but its own, and which consequently cares not one whit what any clumsy human thinks or wishes or expects of it. It is not *treacherous*, because it has never acknowledged any allegiance to anything outside its own leisurely wishes; and *treachery* basically implies a departure from some covenant explicitly recognised. The cat is a realist, and no hypocrite. He takes what pleases him when he wants it, and makes no promises. He never leads you to expect more from him than he gives, and if you choose to be stupidly Victorian enough to mistake his purrs and rubbings of self-satisfaction for marks of transient affection toward you, that is no fault of his. He would not for a moment have you believe that he wants more of you than food and warmth and shelter and amusement—and he is certainly justified in

criticising your aesthetic and imaginative development if you fail to find his grace, beauty, and cheerful decorative influence an aboundingly sufficient repayment for all that you give him. The cat-lover need not be amazed at another's love for dogs—indeed, he may also possess this quality himself; for dogs are often very comely, and as lovable in a condescending way as a faithful old servant or tenant in the eyes of a master—but he cannot help feeling astonishment at those who do not share his love for cats. The cat is such a perfect symbol of beauty and superiority that it seems scarcely possible for any true aesthete and civilised cynic to do other than worship it. We call ourselves a dog's "master"—but who ever dared call himself the "master" of a cat? We *own* a dog—he is with us as a slave and inferior because we wish him to be. But we *entertain* a cat—he adorns our hearth as a guest, fellow-lodger, and equal because *he* wishes to be there. It is no compliment to be the stupidly idolised master of a dog whose instinct it is to idolise, but it is a very distinct tribute to be chosen as the friend and confidant of a philosophic cat who is wholly his own master and could easily choose another companion if he found such an one more agreeable and interesting. A trace, I think, of this great truth regarding the higher dignity of the cat has crept into folklore in the use of the names "cat" and "dog" as terms of opprobrium. Whilst "cat" has never been applied to any sort of offender more serious than the mildly spiteful and innocuously sly female gossip and commentator, the words "dog" and "cur" have always been linked with vileness, dishonour, and degradation of the gravest type. In the crystallisation of this nomenclature there has undoubtedly been present in the popular mind some dim, half-unconscious realisation that there are depths of slinking, whining, fawning, and servile ignobility which no kith of the lion and the leopard could ever attain. The cat may fall low, but he is always unbroken. He is, like the Nordic among men, one of those who govern their own lives or die.

We have but to glance analytically at the two animals to see the points pile up in favour of the cat. Beauty, which is probably the only thing of any basic significance in all the cosmos, ought to be our chief criterion; and here the cat excels so brilliantly that all comparisons col-

lapse. Some dogs, it is true, have beauty in a very ample degree; but even the highest level of canine beauty falls far below the feline average. The cat is classic whilst the dog is Gothic—nowhere in the animal world can we discover such really Hellenic perfection of form, with anatomy adapted to function, as in the felidae. Puss is a Doric temple—an Ionic colonnade—in the utter classicism of its structural and decorative harmonies. And this is just as true kinetically as statically, for art has no parallel for the bewitching grace of the cat's slightest motion. The sheer, perfect aestheticism of kitty's lazy stretchings, industrious face-washings, playful rollings, and little involuntary shiftings in sleep is something as keen and vital as the best pastoral poetry or genre painting; whilst the unerring accuracy of his leaping and springing, running and hunting, has an art-value just as high in a more spirited way. But it is his capacity for leisure and repose which makes the cat preëminent. Mr. Carl Van Vechten, in "Peter Whiffle," holds up the timeless restfulness of the cat as a model for a life's philosophy, and Prof. William Lyon Phelps has very effectively captured the secret of felinity when he says that the cat does not merely *lie down*, but "*pours his body out on the floor like a glass of water.*" What other creature has thus merged the aestheticism of mechanics and hydraulics? Contrast with this the inept panting, wheezing, fumbling, drooling, scratching, and general clumsiness of the average dog with his myriad false and wasted motions. And in the detail of neatness the fastidious cat is of course immeasurably ahead. We always love to touch a cat, but only the insensitive can uniformly welcome the frantic and humid nuzzlings and pawings of a dusty and perhaps not inodorous canine which leaps and fusses and writhes about in awkward feverishness for no particular reason save that blind nerve-centres have been spurred by certain meaningless stimuli. There is a wearying excess of bad manners in all this doggish fury—well-bred people don't paw and maul one, and surely enough we invariably find the cat gentle and reserved in his advances, and delicate even when he glides gracefully into your lap with cultivated purrs, or leaps whimsically on the table where you are writing to play with your pen in modulated, serio-comic pats. I do not wonder that Mahomet, that

sheik of perfect manners, loved cats for their urbanity and disliked dogs for their boorishness; or that cats are the favorites in the polite Latin countries whilst dogs take the lead in heavy, practical, and beer-drinking Central Europe. Watch a cat eat, and then watch a dog. The one is held in check by an inherent and inescapable daintiness, and lends a kind of grace to one of the most ungraceful of all processes. The dog, on the other hand, is wholly repulsive in his bestial and insatiate greediness; living up to his forest kinship by "wolfing" most openly and unashamedly. Returning to beauty of line—is it not significant that while many normal breeds of dogs are conspicuously and admittedly ugly, *no* healthy and well-developed feline of any species whatsoever is other than beautiful? There are, of course, many ugly cats; but these are always individual cases of mongrelism, malnutrition, deformity, or injury. No breed of cats in its proper condition can by any stretch of the imagination be thought of as even slightly ungraceful—a record against which must be pitted the depressing spectacle of impossibly flattened bulldogs, grotesquely elongated dachshunds, hideously shapeless and shaggy Airedales, and the like. Of course, it may be said that no aesthetic standard is other than relative—but we always work with such standards as we empirically have, and in comparing cats and dogs under the Western European aesthetic we cannot be unfair to either. If any undiscovered tribe in Thibet finds Airedales beautiful and Persian cats ugly, we will not dispute them on their own territory—but just now we are dealing with ourselves and our territory, and here the verdict would not admit of much doubt even from the most ardent kynophile. Such an one usually passes the problem off in an epigrammatic paradox, and says that "Snookums is so homely, he's pretty!" This is the childish penchant for the grotesque and tawdrily "cute," which we see likewise embodied in popular cartoons, freak dolls, and all the malformed decorative trumpery of the "Billikin" or "Krazy Kat" order found in the "dens" and "cosy corners" of the would-be-sophisticated yokelry.

In the matter of intelligence we find the caninites making amusing claims—amusing because they so naively measure what they conceive to be an animal's intelligence by its degree of subservience to the human

will. A dog will retrieve, a cat will not; *therefore* (sic!) the dog is the more intelligent. Dogs can be more elaborately trained for circus and vaudeville acts than cats, *therefore* (O Zeus, O Royal Mount!) they are cerebrally superior. Now of course this is all the sheerest nonsense. We would not call a weak-spirited man more intelligent than an independent citizen because we can make him vote as we wish whereas we can't influence the independent citizen, yet countless persons apply an exactly parallel argument in appraising the grey matter of dogs and cats. Competition in servility is something to which no self-respecting Thomas or Tabitha ever stooped, and it is plain that any really effective estimate of canine and feline intelligence must proceed from a careful observation of dogs and cats in a detached state—uninfluenced by human beings—as they formulate certain objectives of their own and use their own mental equipment in achieving them. When we do this, we arrive at a very wholesome respect for our purring hearthside friend who makes so little display about his wishes and business methods; for in every conception and calculation he shows a steel-cold and deliberate union of intellect, will, and sense of proportion which puts utterly to shame the emotional sloppings-over and docilely acquired artificial tricks of the "clever" and "faithful" pointer or sheep-dog. Watch a cat decide to move through a door, and see how patiently he waits for his opportunity, never losing sight of his purpose even when he finds it expedient to feign other interests in the interim. Watch him in the thick of the chase, and compare his calculating patience and quiet study of his terrain with the noisy floundering and pawing of his canine rival. It is not often that he returns empty-handed. He knows what he wants, and means to get it in the most effective way, even at the sacrifice of time—which he philosophically recognises as unimportant in the aimless cosmos. There is no turning him aside or distracting his attention—and we know that among humans this very quality of mental tenacity, this ability to carry a single thread through complex distractions, is considered a pretty good sign of intellectual vigour and maturity. Children, old crones, peasants, and dogs ramble; cats and philosophers stick to their point. In resourcefulness, too, the cat attests his superiority. Dogs can be well

trained to do a single thing, but psychologists tell us that these responses to an automatic memory instilled from outside are of little worth as indices of real intelligence. To judge the abstract development of a brain, confront it with new and unfamiliar conditions and see how well its own strength enables it to achieve its object by sheer reasoning without blazed trails. Here the cat can silently devise a dozen mysterious and successful alternatives whilst poor Fido is barking in bewilderment and wondering what it is all about. Granted that Rover the retriever may make a greater bid for popular sentimental regard by going into the burning house and saving the baby in traditional cinema fashion, it remains a fact that whiskered and purring Nig is a higher-grade biological organism—something physiologically and psychologically nearer a man because of his very freedom from man's orders, and as such entitled to a higher respect from those who judge by purely philosophic and aesthetic standards. We can respect a cat as we cannot respect a dog, no matter which personally appeals the more to our mere doting fancy; and if we be aesthetes and analysts rather than commonplace-lovers and emotionalists, the scales must inevitably turn completely in kitty's favour. It may be added, moreover, that even the aloof and sufficient cat is by no means devoid of sentimental appeal. Once we get rid of the uncivilised ethical bias—the "treacherous" and "horrid bird-catcher" prejudice—we find in the "harmless, necessary cat" the very apex of happy domestic symbolism; whilst small kittens become objects to adore, idealise, and celebrate in the most rhapsodic of dactyls and anapaests, iambics and trochaics. I, in my own senescent mellowness, confess to an inordinate and wholly unphilosophic predilection for tiny coal-black kittens with large yellow eyes, and could no more pass one without petting him than Dr. Johnson could pass a sidewalk post without striking it. There is, likewise, in many cats something quite analogous to the reciprocal fondness so loudly extolled in dogs, human beings, horses, and the like. Cats come to associate certain persons with acts continuously contributing to their pleasure, and acquire for them a recognition and attachment which manifests itself in pleasant excitement at their approach—whether or not bearing food and drink—and a certain

pensiveness at their protracted absence. A cat with whom I was on intimate terms reached the point of accepting food from no hand but one, and would actually go hungry rather than touch the least morsel from a kindly neighbour source. He also had distinct affections amongst the other cats of that idyllic household; voluntarily offering food to one of his whiskered friends, whilst disputing most savagely the least glance which his coal-black rival "Snowball" would bestow upon his plate. If it be argued that these feline fondnesses are essentially "selfish" and "practical" in their ultimate composition, let us inquire in return how many human fondnesses, apart from those springing directly upon primitive brute instinct, have any other basis. After the returning board has brought in the grand total of zero we shall be better able to refrain from ingenuous censure of the "selfish" cat.

The superior imaginative inner life of the cat, resulting in superior self-possession, is well-known. A dog is a pitiful thing, depending wholly on companionship, and utterly lost except in packs or by the side of his master. Leave him alone and he does not know what to do except bark and howl and trot about till sheer exhaustion forces him to sleep. A cat, however, is never without the potentialities of contentment. Like a superior man, he knows how to be alone and happy. Once he looks about and finds no one to amuse him, he settles down to the task of amusing himself; and no one really knows cats without having occasionally peeked stealthily at some lively and well-balanced kitten which believes itself to be alone. Only after such a glimpse of unaffected tail-chasing grace and unstudied purring can one fully understand the charm of those lines which Coleridge wrote with reference to the human rather than the feline young—

“. . . a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself.”

But whole volumes could be written on the playing of cats, since the varieties and aesthetic aspects of such sportiveness are infinite. Be it sufficient to say that in such pastimes many cats have exhibited traits and actions which psychologists authentically declare to be motivated

by genuine humour and whimsicality in its purest sense; so that the task of "making a cat laugh" may not be so impossible a thing even outside the borders of Cheshire. In short, a dog is an incomplete thing. Like an inferior man, he needs emotional stimuli from outside, and must set something artificial up as a god and motive. The cat, however, is perfect in himself. Like the human philosopher, he is a self-sufficient entity and microcosm. He is a real and integrated being because he thinks and feels himself to be such, whereas the dog can conceive of himself only in relation to something else. Whip a dog and he licks your hand—faugh! The beast has no idea of himself except as an inferior part of an organism whereof you are a superior part—he would no more think of striking back at you than you would think of pounding your own head when it punishes you with a headache. But whip a cat and watch it glare and move backward hissing in outraged dignity and self-respect! One more blow, and it strikes you in return; for it is a gentleman and your equal, and will accept no infringement on its personality and body of privileges. It is only in your house anyway because it wishes to be, or perhaps even as a condescending favour to yourself. It is the house, not you, it likes; for philosophers realise that human beings are at best only minor adjuncts to scenery. Go one step too far, and it leaves you altogether. You have mistaken your relationship to it and imagined you are its master, and no real cat can tolerate that breach of good manners. Henceforward it will seek companions of greater discrimination and clearer perspective. Let anaemic persons who believe in "turning the other cheek" console themselves with cringing dogs—for the robust pagan with the blood of Nordic twilights in his veins there is no beast like the cat; intrepid steed of Freya, who can boldly look even Thor and Odin full in the face and stare contemplatively with great round eyes of undimmed yellow or green.

In these observations I believe I have outlined with some fulness the divers reasons why, in my opinion and in the smartly timed title-phrase of Mr. Van Doren, "gentlemen prefer cats." The reply of Mr. Terhune in a subsequent issue of the *Tribune* appears to me beside the point; insomuch as it is less a refutation of facts than a mere personal affirma-

tion of the author's membership in that conventional "very human" majority who take affection and companionship seriously, enjoy being important to something alive, hate a "parasite" on mere ethical grounds without consulting the right of beauty to exist for its own sake, and therefore love man's noblest and most faithful friend, the perennial dog. I suppose Mr. Terhune loves horses and babies also, for the three go conventionally together in the great hundred-per-center's credo as highly essential likings for every good and lovable he-man of the Arrow Collar and Harold Bell Wright hero school, even though the automobile and Margaret Sanger have done much to reduce the last two items.

Dogs, then, are peasants and the pets of peasants, cats are gentlemen and the pets of gentlemen. The dog is for him who places crude feeling and outgrown ethics and humanocentricity above austere and disinterested beauty; who just loves "folks and folksiness" and doesn't mind sloppy clumsiness if only something will truly care for him. (Tableau of dog across master's grave—cf. Lanseer, "The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner.") The guy who isn't much for highbrow stuff, but is always on the square and don't (sic) often find the Saddypost or the N.Y. World too deep for him; who hadn't much use for Valentino, but thinks Doug Fairbanks is just about right for an evening's entertainment. Wholesome—constructive—non-morbid—civic-minded—domestic—I forgot to mention the radio) normal—that's the sort of go-getter that had ought to go in for dogs.

The cat is for the aristocrat—whether by birth or inclinations or both—who admires his fellow-aristocrats. He is for the man who appreciates beauty as the one living force in a blind and purposeless universe, and who worships that beauty in all its forms without regard for the sentimental and ethical illusions of the moment. For the man who knows the hollowness of feeling and the emptiness of human objects and aspirations, and who therefore clings solely to what is real—as beauty is real because it pretends to a significance beyond the emotion which it excites and is. For the man who feels sufficient in the cosmos, and asks no scruples of conventional prejudice, but loves repose and strength and freedom and luxury and sufficiency and contemplation; who as a strong

fearless soul wishes something to respect instead of something to lick his face and accept his alternate blows and strokings; who seeks a proud and beautiful equal in the peerage of individualism rather than a cowed and cringing satellite in the hierarchy of fear, subservience, and devotion. The cat is not for the brisk, self-important little worker with a "mission," but for the enlightened dreaming poet who knows that the world contains nothing really worth doing. The dilettante—the connoisseur—the decadent, if you will, though in a healthier age than this there were things for such men to do, so that they were the planners and leaders of those glorious pagan times. The cat is for him who does things not for empty duty but for power, pleasure, splendour, romance, and glamour—for the harpist who sings alone in the night of old battles, or the warrior who goes out to fight such battles for beauty, glory, fame, and the splendour of a land athwart which no shadow of weakness falls. For him who will be lulled by no sops of prose and usefulness, but demands for his comfort the ease and beauty and ascendancy and cultivation which alone make effort worth while. For the man who knows that play, not work, and leisure, not bustle, are the great things of life; and that the round of striving merely in order to strive some more is a bitter irony of which the civilised soul accepts as little as it can.

Beauty, sufficiency, ease, and good manners—what more can civilisation require? We have them all in the divine little monarch who lounges gloriously on his silken cushion before the hearth. Loveliness and joy for their own sake—pride and harmony and coördination—spirit, restfulness, and completeness—all here are present, and need but a sympathetic disillusionment for worship in full measure. What fully civilised soul but would eagerly serve as highpriest of Bast? The star of the cat, I think, is just now in the ascendant, as we emerge little by little from the dreams of ethics and conformity which clouded the nineteenth century and raised the grubbing and unlovely dog to the pinnacle of sentimental regard. Whether a renaissance of power and beauty will restore our Western civilisation, or whether the forces of disintegration are already too powerful for any hand to check, none may yet say; but in the present moment of cynical world-unmasking be-

tween the pretence of the eighteen-hundreds and the ominous mystery of the decades ahead we have at least a flash of the old pagan perspective and the old pagan clearness and honesty.

And one idol lit up by that flash, seen fair and lovely on a dream-throne of silk and gold under a chryselephantine dome, is a shape of deathless grace not always given its due among groping mortals—the haughty, the unconquered, the mysterious, the luxurious, the Babylonian, the impersonal, the eternal companion of superiority and art—the type of perfect beauty and the brother of poetry—the bland, grave, competent, and patrician cat.

November 23, 1926.

The Invisible Monster

By SONIA H. GREENE

I HAVE NEVER heard an even approximately adequate explanation of the horror at Martin's Beach. Despite the large number of witnesses, no two accounts agree; and the testimony taken by local authorities contains the most amazing discrepancies.

Perhaps this haziness is natural in view of the unheard-of character of the horror itself, the almost paralytic terror of all who saw it, and the efforts made by the fashionable Wavecrest Inn to hush it up after the publicity created by Prof. Alton's article, "Are Hypnotic Powers Confined to Recognized Humanity?"

Against all these obstacles I am striving to present a coherent version; for I beheld the hideous occurrence, and believe it should be known in view of the appalling possibilities it suggests. Martin's Beach is once more popular as a watering-place, but I shudder when I think of it. Indeed, I cannot look at the ocean at all now without shuddering.

Fate is not always without a sense of drama and climax, hence the terrible happening of August 8, 1922 swiftly followed a period of minor and agreeably wonder-fraught excitement at Martin's Beach. On May 17 the crew of the fishing smack *Alma* of Gloucester, under Capt. James P. Orne, killed, after a battle of nearly forty hours, a marine monster whose size and aspect produced the greatest possible stir in scientific circles and caused certain Boston naturalists to take every precaution for its taxidermic preservation.

The object was some fifty feet in length, of roughly cylindrical shape, and about ten feet in diameter. It was unmistakably a gilled fish in its major affiliations; but with certain curious modifications, such as rudimentary forelegs and six-toed feet in place of pectorial fins, which prompted the widest speculation. Its extraordinary mouth, its thick and

scaly hide, and its single, deep-set eye were wonders scarcely less remarkable than its colossal dimensions; and when the naturalists pronounced it an infant organism, which could not have been hatched more than a few days, public interest mounted to extraordinary heights.

Captain Orne, with typical Yankee shrewdness, obtained a vessel large enough to hold the object in its hull, and arranged for the exhibition of his prize. With judicious carpentry he prepared what amounted to an excellent marine museum, and, sailing south to the wealthy resort district of Martin's Beach, anchored at the hotel wharf and reaped a harvest of admission fees.

The intrinsic marvelousness of the object, and the importance which it clearly bore in the minds of many scientific visitors from near and far, combined to make it the season's sensation. That it was absolutely unique—unique to a scientifically revolutionary degree—was well understood. The naturalists had shown plainly that it radically differed from the similarly immense fish caught off the Florida coast; that, while it was obviously an inhabitant of almost incredible depths, perhaps thousands of feet, its brain and principal organs indicated a development startlingly vast, and out of all proportion to anything hitherto associated with the fish tribe.

On the morning of July 20 the sensation was increased by the loss of the vessel and its strange treasure. In the storm of the preceding night it had broken from its moorings and vanished forever from the sight of man, carrying with it the guard who had slept aboard despite the threatening weather. Capt. Orne, backed by extensive scientific interests and aided by large numbers of fishing boats from Gloucester, made a thorough and exhaustive searching cruise, but with no result other than the prompting of interest and conversation. By August 7 hope was abandoned, and Capt. Orne had returned to the Wavecrest Inn to wind up his business affairs at Martin's Beach and confer with certain of the scientific men who remained there. The horror came on August 8.

It was in the twilight, when grey sea-birds hovered low near the

shore and a rising moon began to make a glittering path across the waters. The scene is important to remember, for every impression counts. On the beach were several strollers and a few late bathers; stragglers from the distant cottage colony that rose modestly on a green hill to the north, or from the adjacent cliff-perched Inn whose imposing towers proclaimed its allegiance to wealth and grandeur.

Well within viewing distance was another set of spectators, the loungers on the Inn's high-ceiled and lantern-lighted veranda, who appeared to be enjoying the dance music from the sumptuous ballroom inside. These spectators, who included Capt. Orne and his group of scientific confreres, joined the beach group before the horror progressed far; as did many more from the Inn. Certainly there was no lack of witnesses, confused though their stories be with fear and doubt of what they saw.

There is no exact record of the time the thing began, although a majority say that the fairly round moon was "about a foot" above the low-lying vapors of the horizon. They mention the moon because what they saw seemed subtly connected with it—a sort of stealthy, deliberate, menacing ripple which rolled in from the far skyline along the shimmering lane of reflected moonbeams, yet which seemed to subside before it reached the shore.

Many did not notice this ripple until reminded by later events; but it seems to have been very marked, differing in height and motion from the normal waves around it. Some called it *cunning* and *calculating*. And as it died away craftily by the black reefs afar out, there suddenly came belching up out of that glitter-streaked brine a cry of death; a scream of anguish and despair that moved pity even while it mocked it.

First to respond to the cry were the two life guards then on duty; sturdy fellows in white bathing attire, with their calling proclaimed in large red letters across their chests. Accustomed as they were to rescue work and to the screams of the drowning, they could find nothing familiar in this unearthly ululation; yet with a trained sense of duty they ignored the strangeness and proceeded to follow their usual course.

Hastily seizing an air-cushion, which with its attached coil of rope lay

always at hand, one of them ran swiftly along the shore to the scene of the gathering crowd; whence, after whirling it about him to gain momentum, he flung the hollow disc far out in the direction from which the sound had come. As the cushion disappeared in the waves, the crowd curiously awaited a sight of the hapless being whose distress had been so great; eager to see the rescue made by the massive rope.

But that rescue was soon acknowledged to be no swift and easy matter; for, pull as they might on the rope, the two muscular guards could not move the object at the other end. Instead, they found that object pulling with equal or even greater force in the very opposite direction, till in a few seconds they were dragged off their feet and into the water by the strange power which had seized on the proffered life-preserver.

One of them, recovering himself, called immediately for help from the crowd on the shore, to whom he flung the remaining coil of rope; and in a moment the guards were seconded by all the hardier men, among whom Capt. Orne was foremost. More than a dozen strong hands were now tugging desperately at the stout line, yet wholly without avail.

Hard as they tugged, the strange force at the other end tugged harder; and since neither side relaxed for an instant, the rope became rigid as steel with the enormous strain. The struggling participants, as well as the spectators, were by this time consumed with curiosity as to the nature of the force in the sea. The idea of a drowning man had long been dismissed; and hints of whales, submarines, monsters, and demons now passed freely around. Where humanity had first led the rescuers, wonder kept them at their task; and they hauled with a grim determination to uncover the mystery.

It being decided at last that a whale must have swallowed the air cushion, Capt. Orne, as a natural leader, shouted to those on shore that a boat must be obtained in order to approach, harpoon, and land the unseen leviathan. Several men at once prepared to scatter in quest of a suitable craft, while others came to supplant the captain at the straining rope, since his place was logically with whatever boat party might be formed.

His own idea of the situation was very broad, and by no means

limited to whales, since he had to do with a monster so much stranger. He wondered what might be the acts and manifestations of an adult of the species of which the fifty-foot creature had been the merest infant. And now there developed with appalling suddenness the crucial fact which changed the entire scene from one of wonder to one of horror, and dazed with fright the assembled band of toilers and onlookers. Capt. Orne, turning to leave his post at the rope, found his hands held in their place with unaccountable strength; and in a moment he realized that he was unable to let go of the rope. His plight was instantly divined, and as each companion tested his own situation the same condition was encountered. The fact could not be denied—every struggler was irresistibly held in some mysterious bondage to the hempen line which was slowly, hideously, and relentlessly pulling them out to sea.

Speechless horror ensued; a horror in which the spectators were petrified to utter inaction and mental chaos. Their complete demoralization is reflected in the conflicting accounts they give, and the sheepish excuses they offer for their seemingly callous inertia. I was one of them, and know.

Even the strugglers, after a few frantic screams and futile groans, succumbed to the paralyzing influence and kept silent and fatalistic in the face of unknown powers. There they stood in the pallid moonlight, blindly pulling against a spectral doom and swaying monotonously backward and forward as the water rose first to their knees, then to their hips. The moon went partly under a cloud, and in the half-light the line of swaying men resembled some sinister and gigantic centipede, writhing in the clutch of a terrible creeping death.

Harder and harder grew the rope, as the tug in both directions increased, and the strands swelled with the undisturbed soaking of the rising waves. Slowly the tide advanced, till the sands so lately peopled by laughing children and whispering lovers were now swallowed by the inexorable flow. The herd of panic-stricken watchers surged blindly backward as the water crept above their feet, while the frightful line of strugglers swayed hideously on, half submerged, and now at a substantial distance from their audience. Silence was complete.

The crowd, having gained a huddling-place beyond reach of the tide,

stared in mute fascination; without offering a word of advice or encouragement, or attempting any kind of assistance. There was in the air a nightmare fear of impending evils such as the world had never before known.

Minutes seemed lengthened into hours, and still that human snake of swaying torsos was seen above the fast rising tide. Rhythmically it undulated; slowly, horribly, with the seal of doom upon it. Thicker clouds now passed over the ascending moon, and the glittering path on the waters faded nearly out.

Very dimly writhed the serpentine line of nodding heads, with now and then the livid face of a backward-glancing victim gleaming pale in the darkness. Faster and faster gathered the clouds, till at length their angry rifts shot down sharp tongues of febrile flame. Thunders rolled, softly at first, yet soon increasing to a deafening, maddening intensity. Then came a culminating crash—a shock whose reverberations seemed to shake land and sea alike—and on its heels a cloudburst whose drenching violence overpowered the darkened world as if the heavens themselves had opened to pour forth a vindictive torrent.

The spectators, instinctively acting despite the absence of conscious and coherent thought, now retreated up the cliff steps to the hotel veranda. Rumors had reached the guests inside, so that the refugees found a state of terror nearly equal to their own. I think a few frightened words were uttered, but cannot be sure.

Some, who were staying at the Inn, retired in terror to their rooms; while others remained to watch the fast sinking victims as the line of bobbing heads showed above the mounting waves in the fitful lightning flashes. I recall thinking of those heads, and the bulging eyes they must contain; eyes that might well reflect all the fright, panic, and delirium of a malignant universe—all the sorrow, sin, and misery, blasted hopes and unfulfilled desires, fear, loathing and anguish, alight with all the soul-racking pain of eternally blazing infernos.

And as I gazed out beyond the heads, my fancy conjured up still another eye; a single eye, equally alight, yet with a purpose so revolting to my brain that the vision soon passed. Held in the clutches of an un-

known vise, the line of the damned dragged on; their silent screams and unuttered prayers known only to the demons of the black waves and the night-wind.

There now burst from the infuriate sky such a mad cataclysm of satanic sound that even the former crash seemed dwarfed. Amidst a blinding glare of descending fire the voice of heaven resounded with the blasphemies of hell, and the mingled agony of all the lost reverberated in one apocalyptic, planet-rending peal of Cyclopean din. It was the end of the storm, for with uncanny suddenness the rain ceased and the moon once more cast her pallid beams on a strangely quieted sea.

There was no line of bobbing heads now. The waters were calm and deserted, and broken only by the fading ripples of what seemed to be a whirlpool far out in the path of the moonlight whence the strange cry had first come. But as I looked along that treacherous lane of silvery sheen, with fancy fevered and senses overwrought, there trickled upon my ears from some abysmal sunken waste the faint and sinister echoes of a laugh.

Four O'Clock

By SONIA H. GREENE

ABOUT TWO in the morning I knew it was coming. The great black silences of night's depth told me, and a monstrous cricket, chirping with a persistence too hideous to be unmeaning, made it certain. It is to be at four o'clock—at four in the dusk before dawn, just as he said it would be. I had not fully believed it previously, because the prophecies of vindictive madmen are seldom to be taken with seriousness. Besides, I was not justly to be blamed for what had befallen him at four o'clock on that other morning; that terrible morning whose memory will never leave me. And when, at length, he had died and was buried in the ancient cemetery just across the road from my east windows, I was certain that his curse could not harm me. Had I not seen his lifeless clay securely pinned down by huge shovelfuls of mould? Might I not feel assured that his crumbling bones would be powerless to bring me the doom at a day and an hour so precisely stated? Such, indeed, had been my thoughts until this shocking night itself; this night of incredible chaos, of shattered certainties, and of nameless portents.

I had retired early, hoping fatuously to snatch a few hours of sleep despite the prophecy which haunted me. Now that the time was so close at hand, I found it harder and harder to dismiss the vague fears which had always lain beneath my conscious thoughts. As the cooling sheets soothed my fevered body, I could find nothing to soothe my still more fevered mind; but lay tossing and uneasily awake, trying first one position and then another in a desperate effort to banish with slumber that one damnably insistent notion—*that it is to occur at four o'clock*.

Was this frightful unrest due to my surroundings; to the fateful locality in which I was sojourning after so many years? Why, I now asked myself bitterly, had I permitted circumstance to place me on this

night of all nights, in that well-remembered house and that well-remembered room whose east windows overlook the lonely road and the ancient country cemetery beyond? In my mind's eye every detail of that unpretentious necropolis rose before me—its white fence, its ghost-like granite shafts, and the hovering auras of those on whom the worms fed. Finally the force of the conception led my vision to depths more remote and more forbidden, and I saw under the neglected grass the silent shapes of the things from which the auras came—the calm sleepers, the rotting things, the things which had twisted frantically in their coffins before sleep came, and the peaceful bones in every stage of disintegration from the complete and coherent skeleton to the huddled handful of dust. Most of all I envied the dust. Then new terror came as my fancy encountered *his* grave. Into that sepulchre I dared not let my thought stray, and I should have screamed had not something forestalled the malign power that pulled my mental sight. That something was a sudden gust of wind, sprung from nowhere amidst the calm night, which unfastened the shutter of the nearest window, throwing it back with a shivery slam and uncovering to my actual waking glance the antique cemetery itself, brooding spectrally beneath an early morning moon.

I speak of this gust as something merciful, yet know now that it was only transiently and mockingly so. For no sooner had my eyes compassed the moonlight scene than I became aware of a fresh omen, this time too unmistakable to be classed as an empty phantasm, which arose from among the gleaming tombs across the road. Having glanced with instinctive apprehension toward the spot where *he* lay mouldering—a spot cut off from my gaze by the window-frame—I perceived with trepidation the approach of an indescribable something which flowed menacingly from that very direction; a vague, vaporous, formless mass of greyish-white substance or spirit, dull and tenuous as yet, but every moment increasing in awesome and cataclysmic potentiality. Try as I might to dismiss it as a natural meteorological phenomenon, its fearsomely portentous and *deliberate* character grew upon me amidst new thrills of horror and apprehension; so that I was scarcely unprepared for the definitely purposeful and malevolent culmination which soon occurred.

That culmination, bringing with it a hideous symbolic foreshadowing of the end, was equally simple and threatening. The vapor each moment thickened and piled up, assuming at last a half tangible aspect; while the surface toward me gradually became circular in outline, and markedly concave; as it slowly ceased its advance and stood spectrally at the edge of the road. And as it stood there, faintly quivering in the damp night air under that unwholesome moon, I saw that its aspect was that of the pallid and gigantic dial of a distorted *clock*.

Hideous events now followed in demoniac succession. There took shape in the lower right hand part of the vaporous dial a black and formidable creature, shapeless and only half seen, yet having four prominent claws which reached out greedily at me—claws redolent of noxious fatality in their very contour and location; since they formed too plainly the dreaded outlines, and filled too unmistakably the exact position, of the numeral IV on the quivering dial of doom. Presently the monstrosity stepped or wriggled out of the concave surface of the dial, and began to approach me by some unexplained kind of locomotion. The four talons, long, thin, and straight, were now seen to be tipped by disgusting, thread-like tentacles, each with a vile intelligence of its own, which groped about incessantly, slowly at first, but gradually increasing in velocity until I was nearly driven mad by the sheer dizziness of their motion. And as a crowning horror I began to hear all the subtle and cryptical noises that pierced the intensified night silence; a thousandfold magnified, and in one voice reminding me of the abhorred hour of *four*. In vain I tried to pull up the coverlet to shut them out; in vain I tried to drown them with my screams. I was mute and paralyzed, yet agonizingly aware of every unnatural sight and sound in that devastating, moon-cursed stillness. Once I managed to get my head beneath the covers—once when the cricket's shrieking of that hideous phrase, *four o'clock*, seemed about to shatter my brain—but that only aggravated the terror, making the roars of that detestable creature strike me like the blows of a titanic sledge-hammer.

And now, as I withdrew my tortured head from its fruitless protection, I found augmented diabolism to harass my eyes. Upon the newly painted

wall of my apartment, as if called forth by the tentacled monster from the tomb, there danced mockingly before me a myriad company of beings, black, grey, and white, such as only the fancy of the god-stricken might visualize. Some were of infinitesimal smallness; others covered vast areas. In minor details each had a grotesque and horrible individuality; in general outlines they all conformed to the same nightmare pattern despite their vastly varied size. Again I tried to shut out the abnormalities of the night, but vainly as before. The dancing things on the wall waxed and waned in magnitude, approaching and receding as they trod their morbid and menacing measure. And the aspect of each was that of some demon clock-face with one sinister hour always figured thereon—the dreaded, the doom-delivering hour of *four*.

Baffled in every attempt to shake off the circling and relentless delirium, I glanced once more toward the unshuttered window and beheld again the monster which had come from the grave. Horrible it had been before; indescribable it had now become. The creature, formerly of indeterminate substance, was now formed of red and malignant fire; and waved repulsively its four tentacled claws—unspeakable tongues of living flame. It stared and stared at me out of the blackness; sneeringly, mockingly; now advancing, now retiring. Then, in the tenebrous silence, those four writhing talons of fire beckoned invitingly to their demoniacally dancing counterparts on the walls, and seemed to beat time rhythmically to the shocking saraband till the world was one ghoulishly gyrating vortex of leaping, prancing, gliding; leering, taunting, threatening, *four o'clocks*.

Somewhere, beginning afar off and advancing slowly over the sphinx-like sea and the febrile marshes, I heard the early morning wind come soughing; faintly at first, then louder and louder until its unceasing burden flowed as a deluge of whirring, buzzing cacophony bringing always the hideous threat, "*four o'clock, four o'clock, FOUR O'CLOCK.*" Monotonously it grew from a whisper to a deafening roar, as of a giant cataract, but finally reached a climax and began to subside. As it receded into the distance it left upon my sensitive ears such a vibration as is left by the passing of a swift and ponderous railway

train; this, and a stark dread whose intensity gave it something of the tranquility of resignation.

The end is near. All sound and vision have become one vast chaotic maelstrom of lethal, clamorous menace, wherein are fused all the ghastly and unhallowed four o'clocks which have existed since immemorial time began, and all which will exist in eternities to come. The flaming monster is advancing closely now, its charnel tentacles brushing my face and its talons curving hungrily as they grope toward my throat. At last I can see its face through the churning and phosphorescent vapors of the graveyard air, and with devastating pangs I realize that it is in essence an awful, colossal, gargoyle-like caricature of *his* face—the face of him from whose uneasy grave it has issued. Now I know that my doom is indeed sealed; that the wild threats of the madman were in truth the demon maledictions of a potent fiend, and that my innocence will prove no protection against the malign volition which craves a causeless vengeance. He is determined to pay me with interest for what he suffered at that spectral hour; determined to drag me out of the world into realms which only the mad and the devil-ridden know.

And as amidst the seething of hell's flames and the tumult of the damned those fiery claws point murderously at my throat, I hear upon the mantel the faint whirring sound of a timepiece; the whirring which tells me that it is about to strike the hour whose name now flows incessantly from the death-like and cavernous throat of the rattling, jeering, croaking grave-monster before me—the accursed, the infernal hour of *four o'clock*.

The Horror in the Burying Ground

By HAZEL HEALD

WHEN THE STATE highway to Rutland is closed, travelers are forced to take the old Stillwater road past Swamp Hollow. The scenery is superb in places, yet somehow the route has been unpopular for years. There is something depressing about it, especially near Stillwater itself. Motorists feel subtly uncomfortable about the tightly shuttered farmhouse on the knoll just north of the village, and about the white-bearded half-wit who haunts the old burying-ground on the south, apparently talking to the occupants of some of the graves.

Not much is left of Stillwater, now. The soil is played out, and most of the people have drifted to the towns across the distant river or to the city beyond the distant hills. The steeple of the old white church has fallen down, and half of the twenty-odd straggling houses are empty and in various stages of decay. Normal life is found only around Peck's general store and filling-station, and it is here that the curious stop now and then to ask about the shuttered house and the idiot who mutters to the dead.

Most of the questioners come away with a touch of distaste and disquiet. They find the shabby loungers oddly unpleasant and full of unnamed hints in speaking of the long-past events brought up. There is a menacing, portentous quality in the tones which they used to describe very ordinary events—a seemingly unjustified tendency to assume a furtive, suggestive, confidential air, and to fall into awesome whispers at certain points—which insidiously disturbs the listener. Old Yankees often talk like that; but in this case the melancholy aspect of the half-moldering village, and the dismal nature of the story unfolded, give these gloomy, secretive mannerisms an added significance. One feels profoundly the quintessential horror that lurks behind the isolated Puri-

tan and his strange repressions—feels it, and longs to escape precipitately into clearer air.

The loungers whisper impressively that the shuttered house is that of old Miss Sprague—Sophie Sprague, whose brother Tom was buried on the seventeenth of June, back in '86. Sophie was never the same after that funeral—that and the other thing which happened the same day—and in the end she took to staying in all the time. Won't even be seen now, but leaves notes under the back-door mat and has her things brought from the store by Ned Peck's boy. Afraid of something—the old Swamp Hollow burying-ground most of all. Never could be dragged near there since her brother—and the other—were laid away. Not much wonder, though, seeing the way crazy Johnny Dow rants. He hangs around the burying-ground all day and sometimes at night, and claims he talks with Tom—and the other. Then he marches by Sophie's house and shouts things at her—that's why she began to keep the shutters closed. He says things are coming from somewhere to get her sometime. Ought to be stopped, but one can't be too hard on poor Johnny. Besides, Steve Barbour always had his opinions.

Johnny does his talking to two of the graves. One of them is Tom Sprague's. The other, at the opposite end of the graveyard, is that of Henry Thorndike, who was buried on the same day. Henry was the village undertaker—the only one in miles—and never liked around Stillwater. A city fellow from Rutland—been to college and full of book learning. Read queer things nobody else ever heard of, mixed chemicals for no good purpose. Always trying to invent something new—some new-fangled embalming-fluid or some foolish kind of medicine. Some folks said he had tried to be a doctor but failed in his studies and took to the next best profession. Of course, there wasn't much undertaking to do in a place like Stillwater, but Henry farmed on the side.

Mean, morbid disposition—and a secret drinker if you could judge by the empty bottles in his rubbish heap. No wonder Tom Sprague hated him and black-balled him from the Masonic lodge, and warned him off when he tried to make up to Sophie. The way he experimented on animals was against nature and Scripture. Who could forget the state that

collie dog was found in, or what happened to old Mrs. Akeley's cat? Then there was the matter of Deacon Leavitt's calf, when Tom had led a band of the village boys to demand an accounting. The curious thing was that the calf came alive after all in the end, though Tom had found it as stiff as a poker. Some said the joke was on Tom, but Thorndike probably thought otherwise, since he had gone down under his enemy's fist before the mistake was discovered.

Tom, of course, was half drunk at the time. He was a vicious brute at best, and kept his poor sister half cowed with threats. That's probably why she is such a fear-racked creature still. There were only the two of them, and Tom would never let her leave because that meant splitting the property. Most of the fellows were too afraid of him to shine up to Sophie—he stood six feet one in his stockings—but Henry Thorndike was a sly cuss who had ways of doing things behind folk's backs. He wasn't much to look at, but Sophie never discouraged him any. Mean and ugly as he was, she'd have been glad if anybody could have freed her from her brother. She may not have stopped to wonder how she could get clear of him after he got her clear of Tom.

Well, that was the way things stood in June of '86. Up to this point, the whispers of the loungers at Peck's store are not so unbearably portentous; but as they continue, the element of secretiveness and malign tension grows. Tom Sprague, it appears, used to go to Rutland on periodic sprees, his absences being Henry Thorndike's great opportunities. He was always in bad shape when he got back, and old Doctor Pratt, deaf and half blind though he was, used to warn him about his heart, and about the danger of delirium tremens. Folks could always tell by the shouting and cursing when he was home again.

It was on the ninth of June—on a Wednesday, the day after young Joshua Goodenough finished building his new-fangled silo—that Tom started out on his last and longest spree. He came back the next Tuesday morning, and folks at the store saw him lashing his bay stallion the way he did when whisky had a hold of him. Then there came shouts and shrieks and oaths from the Sprague house, and first thing anybody knew Sophie was running over to old Doctor Pratt's at top speed.

The doctor found Thorndike at Sprague's when he got there, and Tom was on the bed in his room, with his eyes staring and foam around his mouth. Old Pratt fumbled around and gave the usual tests, then shook his head solemnly and told Sophie she had suffered a great bereavement—that her nearest and dearest had passed through the pearly gates to a better land, just as everybody knew he would if he didn't let up on his drinking.

Sophie kind of sniffled, the loungers whisper, but didn't seem to take on much. Thorndike didn't do anything but smile—perhaps at the ironic fact that he, always an enemy, was now the only person who could be of any use to Thomas Sprague. He shouted something in old Doctor Pratt's half-good ear about the need of having the funeral early on account of Tom's condition. Drunks, like that were always doubtful subjects, and any extra delay—with merely rural facilities—would entail consequences, visual and otherwise, hardly acceptable to the deceased's loving mourners. The doctor had muttered that Tom's alcoholic career ought to have embalmed him pretty well in advance, but Thorndike assured him to the contrary, at the same time boasting of his own skill, and of the superior methods he had devised through his experiments.

It is here that the whispers of the loungers grow acutely disturbing. Up to this point the story is usually told by Ezra Davenport, or Luther Fry, if Ezra is laid up with chillblains, as he is apt to be in winter; but from now on old Calvin Wheeler takes up the thread, and his voice has a damnably insidious way of suggesting hidden horror. If Johnny Dow happens to be passing by there is always a pause, for Stillwater does not like to have Johnny talk too much with strangers.

Calvin edges close to the traveler and sometimes seizes a coat-lapel with his gnarled, mottled hand while he half shuts his watery blue eyes.

"Well, sir," he whispers, "Henry he went home an' got his undertaker's fixin's—crazy Johnny Dow lugged most of 'em, for he was always doin' chores for Henry—an' says as Doc Pratt an' crazy Johnny should help lay out the body. Doc always did say as how he thought Henry talked too much—a-boastin' what a fine workman he was, an' how lucky it was that Stillwater had a reg'lar undertaker instead of buryin' folks jest as they was, like they do over to Whiteby.

" 'Suppose,' says he, 'some fellow was to be took with some of them paralyzin' cramps like you read about. How'd a body like it when they lowered him down and begun shovelin' the dirt back? How'd he like it when he was chokin' down there under the new headstone, scratchin' an' tearin' if he chanced to get back the power, but all the time knowin' it wasn't no use? No, sir, I tell you it's a blessin' Stillwater's got a smart doctor as knows when a man's dead and when he ain't, and a trained undertaker who can fix a corpse so he'll stay put without no trouble.'

"That was the way Henry went on talkin', most like he was talkin' to poor Tom's remains; and old Doc Pratt he didn't like what he was able to catch of it, even though Henry did call him a smart doctor. Crazy Johnny kept watchin' of the corpse, and it didn't make it none too pleasant the way he'd slobber about things like, 'He ain't cold, Doc,' or 'I see his eyelids move,' or 'give me a syringe full of what makes me feel good.' Thorndike shut him up on that, though we all knowed he'd been givin' poor Johnny drugs. It's a wonder the poor fellow ever got clear of the habit.

"But the worst thing, accordin' to the doctor, was the way the body jerked up when Henry begun to shoot it full of embalmin'-fluid. He'd been boastin' about what a fine new formula he'd got practisin' on cats and dogs, when all of a sudden Tom's corpse began to double up like it was alive and fixin' to wrassle. Land of Goshen, but Doc says he was scared stiff, though he knowed the way corpses act when the muscles begin to stiffen. Well, sir, the long and short of it is, that the corpse sat up an' grabbed a holt of Thorndike's syringe so that it got stuck in Henry hisself, an' give him as neat a dose of his own embalmin'-fluid as you'd wish to see. That got Henry pretty scared, though he yanked the point out and managed to get the body down again and shot full of the fluid. He kept measurin' more of the stuff out as though he wanted to be sure there was enough, and kept reassurin' himself as not much had got into him, but crazy Johnny begun singin' out, 'That's what you give Lige Hopkins's dog when it got all dead an' stiff an' then waked up agin. Now you're a-going to get dead an' stiff like Tom Sprague be! Remember it don't set to work till after a long spell if you don't get much.'

"Sophie, she was downstairs with some of the neighbors—my wife

Matildy, she that's dead an' gone this thirty year, was one of them. They were all tryin' to find out whether Thorndike was over when Tom came home, and whether findin' him there was what set poor Tom off. I may as well say as some folks though it mighty funny that Sophie didn't carry on more, nor mind the way Thorndike had smiled. Not as anybody was hintin' that Henry helped Tom off with some of his queer cooked-up fluids and syringes, or that Sophie would keep still if she thought so—but you know how folks will guess behind a body's back. We all knowed the nigh crazy way Thorndike had hated Tom—not without reason, at that—and Emily Barbour says to my Matildy as how Henry was lucky to have ol' Doc Pratt right on the spot with a death certificate as didn't leave no doubt for nobody."

When old Calvin gets to this point he usually begins to mumble indistinguishably in his straggling, dirty white beard. Most listeners try to edge away from him, and he seldom appears to heed the gesture. It is generally Fred Peck, who was a very small boy at the time of the events, who continues the tale.

Thomas Sprague's funeral was held on Thursday, June seventeenth, only two days after his death. Such haste was thought almost indecent in remote and inaccessible Stillwater, where long distances had to be covered by those who came, but Thorndike had insisted that the peculiar condition of the deceased demanded it. The undertaker had seemed rather nervous since preparing the body, and could be seen frequently feeling his pulse. Old Doctor Pratt thought he must be worrying about the accidental dose of embalming-fluid. Naturally, the story of the "laying out" had spread, so that a double zest animated the mourners who assembled to glut their curiosity and morbid interest.

Thorndike, though he was obviously upset, seemed intent on doing his professional duty in magnificent style. Sophie and others who saw the body were most startled by its utter life-likeness, and the mortuary virtuoso made double sure of his job by repeating certain injections at stated intervals. He almost wrung a sort of reluctant admiration from the townfolk and visitors, though he tended to spoil that impression by his boastful and tasteless talk. Whenever he administered to his silent charge he would repeat that eternal rambling about the good luck of having a

first class undertaker. What—he would say as if directly addressing the body—if Tom had had one of those careless fellows who bury their subjects alive? The way he harped on the horrors of premature burial was truly barbarous and sickening.

Service were held in the stuffy best room—opened for the first time since Mrs. Sprague died. The tuneless little parlor organ groaned disconsolately, and the coffin, supported on trestles near the hall door, was covered with sickly-smelling flowers. It was obvious that a record-breaking crowd was assembling from far and near, and Sophie endeavored to look properly grief-stricken for their benefit. At unguarded moments she seemed both puzzled and uneasy, dividing her scrutiny between the feverish-looking undertaker and the life-like body of her brother. A slow disgust at Thorndike seemed to be brewing within her, and neighbors whispered freely that she would soon send him about his business now that Tom was out of the way—that is, if she could, for such a slick customer was sometimes hard to deal with. But with her money and remaining looks she might be able to get another fellow, and he'd probably take care of Henry well enough.

As the organ wheezed into *Beautiful Isle of Somewhere* the Methodist church choir added their lugubrious voices to the gruesome cacophony, and everyone looked piously at Deacon Leavitt—everyone, that is, except crazy Johnny Dow, who kept his eyes glued to the still form beneath the glass of the coffin. He was muttering softly to himself.

Stephen Barbour—from the next farm—was the only one who noticed Johnny. He shivered as he saw that the idiot was talking directly to the corpse, and even making foolish signs with his fingers as if to taunt the sleeper beneath the plate glass. Tom, he reflected, had kicked poor Johnny around on more than one occasion, though probably not without provocation. Something about this whole event was getting on Stephen's nerves. There was a suppressed tension and brooding abnormality in the air for which he could not account. Johnny ought not to have been allowed in the house—and it was curious what an effort Thorndike seemed to be making to look at the body. Every now and then the undertaker would feel his pulse with an odd air.

The Reverend Silas Atwood droned on in a plaintive monotone about

the deceased—about the striking of Death's sword in the midst of this little family, breaking the earthly tie between this loving brother and sister. Several of the neighbors looked furtively at one another from beneath lowered eyelids, while Sophie actually began to sob nervously. Thorndike moved to her side and tried to reassure her, but she seemed to shrink curiously away from him. His motions were distinctly uneasy, and he seemed to feel acutely the abnormal tension permeating the air. Finally, conscious of his duty as master of ceremonies, he stepped forward and announced in a sepulchral voice that the body might be viewed for the last time.

Slowly the friends and neighbors filed past the bier, from which Thorndike roughly dragged crazy Johnny away. Tom seemed to be resting peacefully. That devil had been handsome in his day. A few genuine sobs—and many feigned ones—were heard, though most of the crowd were content to stare curiously and whisper afterward. Steve Barbour lingered long and attentively over the still face, and moved away shaking his head. His wife, Emily, following after him, whispered that Henry Thorndike had better not boast so much about his work, for Tom's eyes had come open. They had been shut when the services began, for she had been up and looked. But they certainly looked natural—not the way one would expect after two days.

When Fred Peck gets this far he usually pauses as if he did not like to continue. The listener, too, tends to feel that something unpleasant is ahead. But Peck reassures his audience with the statement that what happened isn't as bad as folks like to hint. Even Steve never put into words what he may have thought, and crazy Johnny, of course, can't be counted at all.

It was Luella Morse—the nervous old maid who sang in the choir—who seems to have touched things off. She was filing past the coffin like the rest, but stopped to peer a little closer than anyone else except the Barbours had peered. And then, without warning, she gave a shrill scream and fell in a dead faint.

Naturally, the room was at once a chaos of confusion. Old Doctor Pratt elbowed his way to Luella and called for some water to throw in

her face, and others surged up to look at her and at the coffin. Johnny Dow began chanting to himself, "He knows, he knows, he kin hear all we're a-sayin' and see all we're a-doin', and they'll bury him that way"—but no one stopped to decipher his mumbling except Steve Barbour.

In a very few moments Luella began to come out of her faint, and could not tell exactly what had startled her. All she could whisper was, "The way he looked—the way he looked." But to other eyes the body seemed exactly the same. It was a gruesome sight, though, with those open eyes and that high coloring.

And then the bewildered crowd noticed something which put both Luella and the body out of their minds for a moment. It was Thorndike—on whom the crowd seemed to be having a curiously bad effect. He had evidently been knocked down in the general bustle, and was on the floor trying to drag himself to a sitting posture. The expression on his face was terrifying in the extreme, and his eyes were beginning to take on a glazed, fishy expression. He could scarcely speak aloud, but the husky rattle of his throat held an ineffable desperation which was obvious to all.

"Get me home, quick, and let me be. That fluid I got in my arm by mistake . . . heart action . . . this damned excitement . . . too much . . . wait . . . wait . . . I'll come to later, don't know how long . . . all the time I'll be conscious and know what's going on . . . don't be deceived. . . ."

As his words trailed off into nothingness old Doctor Pratt reached him and felt his pulse—watching a long time and finally shaking his head. "No use doing anything—he's gone. Heart no good—and that fluid he got in his arm must have been bad stuff. I don't know what it is."

A kind of numbness seemed to fall on all the company. New death in the chamber of death! Only Steve Barbour thought to bring up Thorndike's last choking words. Was he surely dead, when he himself had said he might falsely seem so? Wouldn't it be better to wait awhile and see what would happen? And for that matter, what harm would it do if Doc Pratt were to give Tom Sprague another looking over before burial?

Crazy Johnny was moaning, and had flung himself on Thorndike's body like a faithful dog. "Don't ye bury him, don't ye bury him! He ain't dead no more nor Lige Hopkins's dog nor Deacon Leavitt's calf was when he shot 'em full. He's got some stuff he puts into ye to make ye seem like dead when ye ain't! Ye seem like dead but ye know everything what's a-goin' on, and the next day ye come to as good as ever. Don't ye bury him—he'll come to under the earth an' he can't scratch up! He's a good man, an' not like Tom Sprague. Hope to Gawd Tom scratches an' chokes for hours an' hours. . . ."

But no one save Barbour was paying any attention to poor Johnny. Indeed, what Steve himself had said had evidently fallen on deaf ears. Uncertainty was everywhere. Old Doc Pratt was applying final tests and mumbling about death certificate blanks, and unctuous Elder Atwood was suggesting that something be done about a double interment. With Thorndike dead there was no undertaker this side of Rutland, and it would mean a terrible expense if one were to be brought from there, and if Thorndike were not embalmed in this hot June weather—well one couldn't tell. And there were no relatives or friends to be critical unless Sophie chose to be—but Sophie was on the other side of the room, staring silently, fixedly and almost morbidly into her brother's coffin.

Deacon Leavitt tried to restore a semblance of decorum, and had poor Thorndike carried across the hall to the sitting-room, meanwhile sending Zenas Wells and Walter Perkins over to the undertaker's house for a coffin of the right size. The key was in Henry's trousers pocket. Johnny continued to whine and paw at the body, and Elder Atwood busied himself with inquiring about Thorndike's denomination—for Henry had not attended local services. When it was decided that his folks in Rutland—all dead now—had been Baptists, the Reverend Silas decided that Deacon Leavitt had better offer the brief prayer.

It was a gala day for the funeral-fanciers of Stillwater and vicinity. Even Luella had recovered enough to stay. Gossip, murmured and whispered, buzzed busily while a few composing touches were given to Thorndike's cooling, stiffening form. Johnny had been cuffed out of

the house, as most agreed he should have been in the first place, but his distant howls were now and then wafted gruesomely in.

When the body was encoffined and laid out beside that of Thomas Sprague, the silent, almost frightening-looking Sophie gazed intently at it as she had gazed at her brother's. She had not uttered a word for a dangerously long time, and the mixed expression on her face was past all describing or interpreting. As the others withdrew to leave her alone with the dead she managed to find a sort of mechanical speech, but no one could make out the words, and she seemed to be talking first to one body and then the other.

And now, with what would seem to an outsider the acme of gruesome unconscious comedy, the whole funeral mummary of the afternoon was listlessly repeated. Again the organ wheezed, again the choir screeched and scraped, again a droning incantation arose, and again the morbidly curious spectators filed past a macabre object—this time a dual array of mortuary repose. Some of the more sensitive people shivered at the whole proceeding, and again Stephen Barbour felt an underlying note of eldritch horror and demoniac abnormality. God, how life-like both of those corpses were . . . and how in earnest poor Thorn-dike had been about not wanting to be judged dead . . . and how he had hated Tom Sprague . . . but what could one do in the face of common sense—a dead man was a dead man, and there was old Doc Pratt with his years of experience—if nobody else bothered, why should one bother oneself? . . . Whatever Tom had got he had probably deserved . . . and if Henry had done anything to him, the score was even now . . . well, Sophie was free at last. . . .

As the peering procession moved at last toward the hall and the outer door, Sophie was alone with the dead once more. Elder Atwood was out in the road talking to the hearse-driver from Lee's livery stable, and Deacon Leavitt was arranging for a double quota of pall-bearers. Luckily the hearse would hold two coffins. No hurry—Ed Plummer and Ethan Stone were going ahead with shovels to dig the second grave. There would be three livery hacks and any number of private rigs in the cavalcade—no use trying to keep the crowd away from the graves.

Then came that frantic scream from the parlor where Sophie and the bodies were. Its suddenness almost paralyzed the crowd and brought back the same sensation which had surged up when Luella had screamed and fainted. Steve Barbour and Deacon Leavitt started to go in, but before they could enter the house Sophie was bursting forth, sobbing and gasping about "That face at the window! . . . that face at the window! . . ."

At the same time a wild-eyed figure rounded the corner of the house, removing all mystery from Sophie's dramatic cry. It was, very obviously, the face's owner—poor crazy Johnny, who began to leap up and down, pointing at Sophie and shrieking, "She knows! She knows! I seen it in her face when she looked at 'em and talked to 'em! She knows, and she's a-lettin' 'em go down in the earth to scratch an' claw for air. . . . But they'll talk to her so's she kin hear 'em . . . they'll talk to her, an' appear to her . . . and some day they'll come back an' git her!"

Zenas Wells dragged the shrieking half-wit to a woodshed behind the house and bolted him in as best he could. His screams and poundings could be heard at a distance, but nobody paid him any further attention. The procession was made up, and with Sophie in the first hack it slowly covered the short distance past the village to the Swamp Hollow burying-ground.

Elder Atwood made appropriate remarks as Thomas Sprague was laid to rest, and by the time he was through, Ed and Ethan had finished Thorndike's grave on the other side of the cemetery—to which the crowd presently shifted. Deacon Leavitt then spoke ornamentally, and the lowering process was repeated. People had begun to drift off in knots, and the clatter of receding buggies and carry-alls was quite universal, when the shovels began to fly again. As the earth thudded down on the coffin-lids, Thorndike's first, Steve Barbour noticed the queer expressions flitting over Sophie Sprague's face. He couldn't keep track of them all, but behind the rest there seemed to lurk a sort of wry, perverse, half-suppressed look of vague triumph. He shook his head.

Zenas had run back and let crazy Johnny out of the woodshed before Sophie got home, and the poor fellow at once made frantically for the

graveyard. He arrived before the shovelmens were through, and while many of the curious mourners were still lingering about. What he shouted into Tom Sprague's partly-filled grave, and how he clawed at the loose earth of Thorndike's freshly-finished mound across the cemetery, surviving spectators still shudder to recall. Jotham Blake, the constable, had to take him back to the town farm by force, and his screams waked dreadful echoes.

This is where Fred Peck usually leaves off the story. What more, he asks is there to tell? It was a gloomy tragedy, and one can scarcely wonder that Sophie grew queer after that. That is all one hears if the hour is so late that old Calvin Wheeler has tottered home, but when he is still around he breaks in again with that damnably suggestive and insidious whisper. Sometimes those who hear him dread to pass either the shuttered house or the graveyard afterward, especially after dark.

"Heh, heh . . . Fred was only a little shaver then, and don't remember no more than half of what was goin' on! You want to know why Sophie keeps her house shuttered, and why crazy Johnny still keeps a-talkin' to the dead and a-shoutin' at Sophie's windows? Well, sir, I don't know's I know all there is to know, but I hear what I hear."

Here the old man ejects his cud of tobacco and leans forward to buttonhole the listener.

"It was that same night, mind ye—toward mornin', and just eight hours after them burials—when we heard the first scream from Sophie's house. Woke us all up—Steve and Emily Barbour and me and Matildy goes over hot-footin', all in night gear, and finds Sophie all dressed and dead fainted on the settin'-room floor. Lucky she hadn't locked her door. When we got her to she was shakin' like a leaf, and wouldn't let on by so much as a word what was ailin' her. Matildy and Emily done what they could to quiet her down, but Steve whispered things to me as didn't make me none too easy. Come about an hour when we allowed we'd be goin' home soon, that Sophie she begun to tip her head on one side like she was a-listenin' to somethin'. Then on a sudden she screamed again, and keeled over in another faint.

"Well, sir, I'm tellin' what I'm tellin', and won't do no guessin' like

Steve Barbour would a done if he dared. He always was the greatest hand for hintin' things . . . died ten years ago of pneumony. . . .

"What we heard so faint-like was just poor crazy Johnny, of course. 'Tain't more than a mile to the buryin'-ground, and he must a got out of the window where they'd locked him up at the town farm—even if Constable Blake says he didn't get out that night. From that day to this he hangs around them graves a-talkin' to the both of them—cussin' and kickin' at Tom's mound, and puttin' posies and things on Henry's. And when he ain't a-doin' that he's hangin' around Sophie's shuttered windows howlin' about what's a-comin' some day to git her.

"She wouldn't never go near the buryin'-ground and now she won't come out of the house at all nor see nobody. Got to sayin' there was a curse on Stillwater—and I'm dinged if she ain't half right, the way things is a-goin' to pieces these days. There certainly was somethin' queer about Sophie right along. Once when Sally Hopkins was a-callin' on her—in '97 or '98, I think it was—there was an awful rattlin' at her winders—and Johnny was safe locked up at the time—at least, so Constable Dodge swore up and down. But I ain't takin' no stock in their stories about noises every seventeenth of June, or about faint shinin' figures a-tryin' Sophie's door and winders every black mornin' about two o'clock.

"You see, it was about two o'clock in the mornin' that Sophie heard the sounds and keeled over twice that first night after the buryin'. Steve and me, and Matildy and Emily, heard the second lot, faint as it was, just like I told you. And I'm a-tellin' of you again as how it must a been crazy Johnny over to the buryin'-ground, let Jotham Blake claim what he will. There ain't no tellin' the sound of a man's voice so far off, and with our heads full of nonsense it ain't no wonder we thought there was two voices—and voices that hadn't ought to be speakin' at all.

"Steve, he claimed to have heard more than I did. I verily believe he took some stock in ghosts. Matildy and Emily was so scared they didn't remember what they heard. And curious enough, nobody else in town—if anybody was awake at that ungodly hour—never said nothin' about hearin' no sounds at all.

"Whatever it was, was so faint it might have been the wind if there hadn't been words. I made out a few, but didn't want to say as I'd back up all Steve claimed to have caught. . . .

" 'She-devil' . . . 'all the time' . . . 'Henry' . . . and 'alive' was plain . . . and so was 'you know' . . . 'said you'd stand by' . . . 'get rid of him' and 'bury me' . . . in a kind of changed voice. . . . Then there was that awful 'comin' again some day'—in a death-like squawk . . . but you can't tell me Johnny couldn't have made those sounds. . . .

"Hey, you! What's takin' you off in such a hurry? Mebbe there's more I could tell you if I had a mind. . . ."

The Last Test

By ADOLPHE DE CASTRO

FEW PERSONS know the inside of the Clarendon story, or even that there is an inside not reached by the newspapers. It was a San Francisco sensation in the days before the fire, both because of the panic and menace that kept it company, and because of its close linkage with the governor of the state. Governor Dalton, it will be recalled, was Clarendon's best friend, and later married his sister. Neither Dalton nor Mrs. Dalton would ever discuss the painful affair, but somehow the facts have leaked out to a limited circle. But for that, and for the years which have given a sort of vagueness and impersonality to the actors, one would still pause before probing into secrets so strictly guarded at the time.

The appointment of Dr. Alfred Clarendon as medical director of San Quentin Penitentiary in 189- was greeted with the keenest enthusiasm throughout California. San Francisco had at last the honor of harboring one of the greatest biologists and physicians of the period, and solid pathological leaders from all over the world might be expected to flock thither to study his methods, profit by his advice and researches, and learn how to cope with their own local problems. California, almost overnight, would become a center of medical scholarship with earthwide influence and reputation.

Governor Dalton, anxious to spread the news in its fullest significance, saw to it that the press carried ample and dignified accounts of his new appointee. Pictures of Dr. Clarendon and his new home near old Goat Hill, sketches of his career and manifold honors, and popular accounts of his salient scientific discoveries were all presented in the principal California dailies, till the public soon felt a sort of reflected pride in the man whose studies of pyemia in India, of the pest

in China, and of every sort of kindred disorder elsewhere would soon enrich the world of medicine with an antitoxin of revolutionary importance—a basic antitoxin combating the whole febrile principle at its very source, and ensuring the ultimate conquest and extirpation of fever in all its diverse forms.

Back of the appointment stretched an extended and not wholly unromantic history of early friendship, long separation, and dramatically renewed acquaintance. James Dalton and the Clarendon family had been friends in New York ten years before—friends and more than friends, since the doctor's only sister, Georgina, was the sweetheart of Dalton's youth, while the doctor himself had been his closest associate and almost his protégé in the days of school and college. The father of Alfred and Georgina, a Wall Street pirate of the ruthless elder breed, had known Dalton's father well; so well, indeed, that he had finally stripped him of all he possessed in a memorable afternoon's fight on the stock exchange. Dalton Senior, hopeless of recuperation and wishing to give his one adored child the benefit of his insurance, had promptly blown out his brains; but James had not sought to retaliate. It was, as he viewed it, all in the game; and he wished no harm to the father of the girl he meant to marry and of the budding young scientist whose admirer and protector he had been throughout their years of fellowship and study. Instead, he turned to the law, established himself in a small way, and in due course of time asked "Old Clarendon" for Georgina's hand.

Old Clarendon had refused very firmly and loudly, vowing that no pauper and upstart lawyer was fit to be his son-in-law; and a scene of considerable violence had occurred. James, telling the wrinkled freebooter at last what he ought to have been told long before, had left the house and the city in a high temper; and was embarked within a month upon the California life which was to lead him to the governorship through many a fight with ring and politician. His farewells to Alfred and Georgina had been brief, and he had never known the aftermath of that scene in the Clarendon library. Only by a day did he miss the news of Old Clarendon's death from apoplexy, and by so missing it, changed

the course of his whole career. He had not written Georgina in the decade that followed; knowing her loyalty to her father, and waiting till his own fortune and position might remove all obstacles to the match. Nor had he sent any word to Alfred, whose calm indifference in the face of affection and hero-worship had always savored of conscious destiny and the self-sufficiency of genius. Secure in the ties of a constancy rare even then, he had worked and risen with thoughts only of the future; still a bachelor, and with a perfect intuitive faith that Georgina also was waiting.

In this faith Dalton was not deceived. Wondering perhaps why no message ever came, Georgina found no romance save in her dreams and expectations; and in the course of time became busy with the new responsibilities brought by her brother's rise to greatness. Alfred's growth had not belied the promise of his youth, and the slim boy had darted quietly up the steps of science with a speed and permanence almost dizzying to contemplate. Lean and ascetic, with steel-rimmed pince-nez and pointed brown beard, Dr. Alfred Clarendon was an authority at twenty-five and an international figure at thirty. Careless of worldly affairs with the negligence of genius, he depended vastly on the care and management of his sister, and was secretly thankful that her memories of James had kept her from other and more tangible alliances.

Georgina conducted the business and household of the great bacteriologist, and was proud of his strides toward the conquest of fever. She bore patiently with his eccentricities, calmed his occasional bursts of fanaticism, and healed those breaches with his friends which now and then resulted from his unconcealed scorn of anything less than a single-minded devotion to pure truth and its progress. Clarendon was undeniably irritating at times to ordinary folk; for he never tired of depreciating the service of the individual as contrasted with the service of mankind as a whole, and in censuring men of learning who mingled domestic life or outside interests with their pursuit of abstract science. His enemies called him a bore; but his admirers, pausing before the white heat of ecstasy into which he would work himself, became almost ashamed of ever having had any standards or aspirations outside the one divine sphere of unalloyed knowledge.

The doctor's travels were extensive and Georgina generally accompanied him on the shorter ones. Three times, however, he had taken long, lone jaunts to strange and distant places in his studies of exotic fevers and half-fabulous plagues; for he knew that it is out of the unknown lands of cryptic and immemorial Asia that most of the earth's diseases spring. On each of these occasions he had brought back curious mementoes which added to the eccentricity of his home, not least among which was the needlessly large staff of eight Tibetan servants picked up somewhere in U-tsang during an epidemic of which the world never heard, but amidst which Clarendon had discovered and isolated the germ of black fever. These men, taller than most Tibetans and clearly strange in the outside world, were of a skeletoic leanness which made one wonder whether the doctor had sought to symbolize in them the anatomical models of his college years. Their aspect, in the loose black silk robes of Boupa priests which he chose to give them, was grotesque in the highest degree; and there was an unsmiling silence and stiffness in their motions which enhanced their air of fantasy and gave Georgina a queer, awed feeling of having stumbled into the pages of *Vathek* or the *Arabian Nights*.

But queerest of all was the general factotum or clinic-man, whom Clarendon addressed as Surama, and whom he had brought back with him after a long stay in Northern Africa, during which he had studied certain odd intermittent fevers among the mysterious Saharan Tuaregs, whose descent from the primal race of lost Atlantis is an old archeological rumor. Surama, a man of great intelligence and seemingly inexhaustible erudition, was as morbidly lean as the Tibetan servants; with swarthy, parchmentlike skin drawn so tightly over his bald pate and hairless face that every line of the skull stood out in ghastly prominence—this death's head effect being heightened by lusterlessly burning black eyes set with a depth which left to common visibility only a pair of dark, vacant sockets. Unlike the ideal subordinate, he seemed despite his impassive features to spend an effort in concealing such emotions as he possessed. Instead, he carried about an insidious atmosphere of irony or amusement, accompanied at certain moments by a deep, guttural chuckle like that of a giant turtle which has just torn to pieces

some furry animal and is ambling away toward the sea. His race appeared to be Caucasian, but could not be classified more closely than that. Some of Clarendon's friends thought he looked like a high-caste Hindoo notwithstanding his accentless speech, while many agreed with Georgina—who disliked him—when she gave her opinion that a Pharaoh's mummy, if miraculously brought to life, would form a very apt twin for this sardonic skeleton.

Dalton, absorbed in his up-hill political battles and isolated from Eastern interests through the peculiar self-sufficiency of the old West, had not followed the meteoric rise of his former comrade; Clarendon had actually heard nothing of one so far outside his chosen world of science as the governor. Being of independent and even of abundant means, the Clarendons had for many years stuck to their old Manhattan mansion in East Nineteenth Street, whose ghosts must have looked sorely askance at the bizarrerie of Surama and the Tibetans. Then, through the doctor's wish to transfer his base of medical observation, the great change had suddenly come, and they had crossed the continent to take up a secluded life in San Francisco; buying the gloomy old Bannister place near Goat Hill, overlooking the bay, and establishing their strange household in a rambling, French-roofed relic of mid-Victorian design and gold-rush parvenu display, set amidst high-walled grounds in a region still half suburban.

Dr. Clarendon, though better satisfied than in New York, still felt cramped for lack of opportunities to apply and test his pathological theories. Unworldly as he was, he had never thought of using his reputation as an influence to gain public appointment; though more and more he realized that only the medical directorship of a government or a charitable institution—a prison, almshouse, or hospital—would give him a field of sufficient width to complete his researches and make his discoveries of the greatest use to humanity and science at large.

Then he had run into James Dalton by sheer accident one afternoon in Market Street as the governor was swinging out of the Royal Hotel. Georgina had been with him, and an almost instant recognition had

heightened the drama of the reunion. Mutual ignorance of one another's progress had bred long explanations and histories, and Clarendon was pleased to find that he had so important an official for a friend. Dalton and Georgina, exchanging many a glance, felt more than a trace of their youthful tenderness; and a friendship was then and there revived which led to frequent calls and a fuller and fuller exchange of confidences.

James Dalton learned of his old protégé's need for political appointment, and sought, true to his protective rôle of school and college days, to devise some means of giving "Little Alf" the needed position and scope. He had, it is true, wide appointive powers; but the legislature's constant attacks and encroachments forced him to exercise these with the utmost discretion. At length, however, scarcely three months after the sudden reunion, the foremost institutional medical office in the state fell vacant. Weighing all the elements with care, and conscious that his friend's achievements and reputation would justify the most substantial rewards, the governor felt at last able to act. Formalities were few, and on the 8th of November, 189-, Dr. Alfred Schuyler Clarendon became medical director of the California State Penitentiary at San Quentin.

In scarcely more than a month the hopes of Dr. Clarendon's admirers were amply fulfilled. Sweeping changes in methods brought to the prison's medical routine an efficiency never before dreamed of; and though the subordinates were naturally not without jealousy, they were obliged to admit the magical results of a really great man's superintendence. Then came a time where mere appreciation might well have grown to devout thankfulness at a providential conjunction of time, place, and man; for one morning Dr. Jones came to his new chief with a grave face to announce his discovery of a case which he could not but identify as that selfsame black fever whose germ Clarendon had found and classified.

Dr. Clarendon showed no surprise, but kept on at the writing before him.

"I know," he said evenly; "I came across that case yesterday. I'm glad you recognized it. Put the man in a separate ward, though I don't believe this fever is contagious."

Dr. Jones, with his own opinion of the malady's contagiousness, was glad of this deference to caution; and hastened to execute the order. Upon his return Clarendon rose to leave, declaring that he would himself take charge of the case alone. Disappointed in his wish to study the great man's methods and technique, the junior physician watched his chief stride away toward the lone ward where he had placed the patient, more critical of the new regime than at any time since admiration had displaced his first jealous pangs.

Reaching the ward, Clarendon entered hastily, glancing at the bed and stepping back to see how far Dr. Jones's obvious curiosity might have led him. Then, finding the corridor still vacant, he shut the door and turned to examine the sufferer. The man was a convict of a peculiarly repulsive type, and seemed to be racked by the keenest throes of agony. His features were frightfully contracted, and his knees drawn sharply up in the mute desperation of the stricken. Clarendon studied him closely, raising his tightly shut eyelids, took his pulse and temperature, and finally dissolving a tablet in water, forced the solution between the sufferer's lips. Before long the height of the attack abated, as shown by the relaxing body and returning normality of expression, and the patient began to breathe more easily. Then, by a soft rubbing of the ears, the doctor caused the man to open his eyes. There was life in them, for they moved from side to side, though they lacked the fine fire which we are wont to deem the image of the soul. Clarendon smiled as he surveyed the peace his help had brought, feeling behind him the power of an all-capable science. He had long known of this case, and had snatched the victim from death with the work of a moment. Another hour and this man would have gone—yet Jones had seen the symptoms for days before discovering them, and having discovered them, did not know what to do.

Man's conquest of disease, however, can not be perfect. Clarendon, assuring the dubious trusty-nurses that the fever was not contagious,

had had the patient bathed, sponged in alcohol, and put to bed; but was told the next morning that the case was lost. The man had died after midnight in the most intense agony, and with such cries and distortions of face that the nurses were driven almost to panic. The doctor took this news with his usual calm, whatever his scientific feelings may have been, and ordered the burial of the patient in quicklime. Then, with a philosophic shrug of the shoulders, he made the usual rounds of the penitentiary.

Two days later the prison was hit again. Three men came down at once this time, and there was no concealing the fact that a black fever epidemic was under way. Clarendon, having adhered so firmly to his theory of non-contagiousness, suffered a distinct loss of prestige, and was handicapped by the refusal of the trusty-nurses to attend the patients. Theirs was not the soul-free devotion of those who sacrifice themselves to science and humanity. They were convicts, serving only because of the privileges they could not otherwise buy, and when the price became too great they preferred to resign the privileges.

But the doctor was still master of the situation. Consulting with the warden and sending urgent messages to his friend the governor, he saw to it that special rewards in cash and in reduced terms were offered to the convicts for the dangerous nursing service; and by this method succeeded in getting a very fair quota of volunteers. He was steeled for action now, and nothing could shake his poise and determination. Additional cases brought only a curt nod, and he seemed a stranger to fatigue as he hastened from bedside to bedside all over the vast stone home of sadness and evil. More than forty cases developed within another week, and nurses had to be brought from the city. Clarendon went home very seldom at this stage, often sleeping on a cot in the warden's quarters, and always giving himself up with typical abandon to the service of medicine and of mankind.

Then came the first mutterings of that storm which was soon to convulse San Francisco. News will out, and the menace of black fever spread over the town like a fog from the bay. Reporters trained in the doctrine of "sensation first" used their imagination without restraint, and

gloried when at last they were able to produce a case in the Mexican quarter which a local physician—fonder perhaps of money than of truth or civic welfare—pronounced black fever.

That was the last straw. Frantic at the thought of the crawling death so close upon them, the people of San Francisco went mad en masse, and embarked upon that historic exodus of which all the country was soon to hear over busy wires. Ferries and rowboats, excursion steamers and launches, railways and cable cars, bicycles and carriages, moving-vans and work carts, all were pressed into instant and frenzied service. Sausalito and Tamalpais, as lying in the direction of San Quentin, shared in the flight; while housing space in Oakland, Berkeley, and Alameda rose to fabulous prices. Tent colonies sprang up, and improvised villages lined the crowded southward highways from Millbrae to San Jose. Many sought refuge with friends in Sacramento, while the fright-shaken residue forced by various causes to stay behind could do little more than maintain the basic necessities of a nearly dead city.

Business, save for quack doctors with "sure cures" and "preventives" for use against the fever, fell rapidly to the vanishing-point. At first the saloons offered "medicated drinks," but soon found that the populace preferred to be duped by charlatans of more professional aspect. In strangely noiseless streets persons peered into one another's faces to glimpse possible plague symptoms, and shopkeepers began more and more to refuse admission to their clientele, each customer seeming to them a fresh fever menace. Legal and judicial machinery began to disintegrate as attorneys and county clerks succumbed one by one to the urge for flight. Even the doctors deserted in large numbers, many of them pleading the need of vacations among the mountains and the lakes in the northern part of the state. Schools and colleges, theaters and cafés, restaurants and saloons, all gradually closed their doors; and in a single week San Francisco lay prostrate and inert with only its light, power, and water service even half normal, with newspapers in skelemonic form, and with a crippled parody on transportation maintained by the horse and cable cars.

This was the lowest ebb. It could not last long, for courage and obser-



Mrs. Sonia H. Davis, who was for several years Mrs. H. P. Lovecraft.



Dr. Adolphe de Castro, a client and friend of Lovecraft's.

vation are not altogether dead in mankind; and sooner or later the non-existence of any widespread black fever epidemic outside San Quentin became too obvious a fact to deny, notwithstanding several actual cases and the undeniable spread of typhoid in the insanitary suburban tent colonies. The leaders and editors of the community conferred and took action, enlisting in their service the very reporters whose energies had done so much to bring on the trouble, but now turning their "sensation first" avidity into more constructive channels. Editorials and fictitious interviews appeared, telling of Dr. Clarendon's complete control of the disease, and of the absolute impossibility of its diffusion beyond the prison walls. Reiteration and circulation slowly did their work, and gradually a slim backward trickle of urbanites swelled into a vigorous reflux stream. One of the first healthy symptoms was the start of a newspaper controversy of the approved acrimonious kind, attempting to fix blame for the panic wherever the various participants thought it belonged. The returning doctors, jealously strengthened by their timely vacations, began striking at Clarendon, assuring the public that they as well as he would keep the fever in leash, and censuring him for not doing even more to check its spread within San Quentin.

Clarendon had, they averred, permitted far more deaths than were necessary. The veriest tyro in medicine knew how to check fever contagion; and if this renowned savant did not do it, it was clearly because he chose for scientific reasons to study the final effects of the disease, rather than to prescribe properly and save the victims. This policy, they insinuated, might be proper enough among convicted murderers in a penal institution, but it would not do in San Francisco, where life was still a precious and sacred thing. Thus they went on, and the papers were glad to publish all they wrote, since the sharpness of the campaign, in which Dr. Clarendon would doubtless join, would help to obliterate confusion and restore confidence among the people.

But Clarendon did not reply. He only smiled, while his singular clinic-man Surama indulged in many a deep, testudinous chuckle. He was at home more nowadays, so that reporters began besieging the gate of the great wall the doctor had built around his house, instead of pestering

the warden's office at San Quentin. Results, though, were equally meager; for Surama formed an impassable barrier between the doctor and the outer world—even after the reporters had got into the grounds. The newspaper men getting access to the front hall had glimpses of Clarendon's singular entourage and made the best they could in a "write-up" of Surama and the queer skelemonic Tibetans. Exaggeration, of course, occurred in every fresh article, and the net effect of the publicity was distinctly adverse to the great physician. Most persons hate the unusual, and hundreds who could have excused heartlessness or incompetence stood ready to condemn the grotesque taste manifested in the chuckling attendant and the eight black-robed Orientals.

Early in January an especially persistent young man from the *Observer* climbed the moated eight-foot brick wall in the rear of the Clarendon grounds and began a survey of the varied outdoor appearances which trees concealed from the front walk. With quick, alert brain he took in everything—the rose-arbor, the aviaries, the animal cages where all sorts of mammalia from monkeys to guinea-pigs might be seen and heard, the stout wooden clinic building with barred windows in the northwest corner of the yard—and bent searching glances throughout the thousand square feet of intramural privacy. A great article was brewing, and he would have escaped unscathed but for the barking of Dick, Georgina Clarendon's gigantic and beloved St. Bernard. Surama, instant in his response, had the youth by the collar before a protest could be uttered, and was presently shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat, and dragging him through the trees to the front yard and the gate.

Breathless explanations and quavering demands to see Dr. Clarendon were useless. Surama only chuckled and dragged his victim on. Suddenly a positive fright crept over the dapper scribe, and he began to wish desperately that this unearthly creature would speak, if only to prove that he really was a being of honest flesh and blood belonging to this planet. He became deathly sick, and strove not to glimpse the eyes which he knew must lie at the base of those gaping black sockets. Soon he heard the gate open and felt himself propelled violently through; in another moment waking rudely to the things of earth as he landed wetly and muddily in the ditch which Clarendon had had dug around the entire

length of the wall. Fright gave place to rage as he heard the massive gate slam shut, and he rose to shake his fist at the forbidding portal. Then, as he turned to go, a soft sound grated behind him, and through a small wicket in the gate he felt the sunken eyes of Surama and heard the echoes of a deep-voiced, blood-freezing chuckle.

This young man, feeling perhaps justly that his handling had been rougher than he deserved, resolved to revenge himself upon the household responsible for his treatment. Accordingly he prepared a fictitious interview with Dr. Clarendon, supposed to be held in the clinic building, during which he was careful to describe the agonies of a dozen black fever patients whom his imagination ranged on orderly rows of couches. His master-stroke was the picture of one especially pathetic sufferer gasping for water, while the doctor held a glass of the sparkling fluid just out of his reach, in a scientific attempt to determine the effect of a tantalizing emotion on the course of the disease. This invention was followed by paragraphs of insinuating comment so outwardly respectful that it bore a double venom. Dr. Clarendon was, the article ran, undoubtedly the greatest and most single-minded scientist in the world; but science is no friend to individual welfare, and one would not like to have one's gravest ills drawn out and aggravated merely to satisfy an investigator on some point of abstract truth. Life is too short for that.

Altogether, the article was diabolically skilful, and succeeded in horrifying nine readers out of ten against Dr. Clarendon and his supposed methods. Other papers were quick to copy and enlarge upon its substance, taking the cue it offered, and commencing a series of "faked" interviews which fairly ran the gamut of derogatory fantasy. In no case, however, did the doctor condescend to offer a contradiction. He had no time to waste on fools and liars, and cared little for the esteem of a thoughtless rabble he despised. When James Dalton telegraphed his regrets and offered aid, Clarendon replied with an almost boorish curtness. He did not heed the barking of dogs, and could not bother to muzzle them. Nor would he thank anyone for messing with a matter wholly beneath notice. Silent and contemptuous, he continued his duties with tranquil evenness.

But the young reporter's spark had done its work. San Francisco was

insane again, and this time as much with rage as with fear. Sober judgment became a lost art; and though no second exodus occurred, there ensued a reign of vice and recklessness born of desperation, and suggesting parallel phenomena in mediaeval times of pestilence. Hatred ran riot against the man who had found the disease and was struggling to restrain it, and a light-headed public forgot his great services to knowledge in their efforts to fan the flames of resentment. They seemed, in their blindness, to hate him in person, rather than the plague which had come to their breeze-cleaned and usually healthy city.

Then the young reporter, playing in the Neronic fire he had kindled, added a crowning personal touch of his own. Remembering the indignities he had suffered at the hands of the cadaverous clinic-man, he prepared a mastery article on the home and environment of Dr. Clarendon, giving especial prominence to Surama, whose very aspect he declared sufficient to scare the healthiest person into any sort of fever. He tried to make the gaunt chuckler appear equally ridiculous and terrible, succeeding best, perhaps, in the latter half of his intention, since a tide of horror always welled up whenever he thought of his brief proximity to the creature. He collected all the rumors current about the man, elaborated on the unholy depth of his reputed scholarship, and hinted darkly that it could have been no godly realm of secret and eonweighted Africa wherein Dr. Clarendon had found him.

Georgina, who followed the papers closely, felt crushed and hurt by these attacks upon her brother, but James Dalton, who called often at the house, did his best to comfort her. In this he was warm and sincere; for he wished not only to console the woman he loved, but to utter some measure of the reverence he had always felt for the starward-bound genius who had been his youth's closest comrade. He told Georgina how greatness can never be exempted from the shafts of envy, and cited the long, sad list of splendid brains crushed beneath vulgar heels. The attacks, he pointed out, formed the truest of all proofs of Alfred's solid eminence.

"But they hurt just the same," she rejoined, "and all the more because I know that Al really suffers from them, no matter how indifferent he tries to be."

Dalton kissed her hand in a manner not then obsolete among well-born persons.

"And it hurts me a thousand times more, knowing that it hurts you and Alf. But never mind, Georgie, we'll stand together and pull through it!"

Thus it came about that Georgina came more and more to rely on the strength of the steel-firm, square-jawed governor who had been her youthful swain, and more and more to confide in him the things she feared. The press attacks and the epidemic were not quite all. There were aspects of the household which she did not like. Surama, cruel in equal measure to man and beast, filled her with the most unnamable repulsion; and she could not but feel that he meant some vague, indefinable harm to Alfred. She did not like the Tibetans, either, and thought it very peculiar that Surama was able to talk with them. Alfred would not tell her who or what Surama was, but had once explained rather haltingly that he was a much older man than would be commonly thought credible, and that he had mastered secrets and been through experiences calculated to make him a colleague of phenomenal value for any scientist seeking nature's hidden mysteries.

Urged by her uneasiness, Dalton became a still more frequent visitor at the Clarendon home, though he saw that his presence was deeply resented by Surama. The bony clinic-man formed the habit of glaring peculiarly from those spectral sockets when admitting him, and would often, after closing the gate when he left, chuckle monotonously in a manner that made his flesh creep. Meanwhile Dr. Clarendon seemed oblivious of everything save his work at San Quentin, whither he went each day in his launch—alone save for Surama, who managed the wheel while the doctor read or collated his notes. Dalton welcomed these regular absences for they gave him constant opportunities to renew his suit for Georgina's hand. When he would overstay and meet Alfred, however, the latter's greeting was always friendly despite his habitual reserve. In time the engagement of James and Georgina grew to be a definite thing, and the two awaited only a favorable chance to speak to Alfred.

The governor, whole-souled in everything and firm in his protective

loyalty, spared no pains in spreading propaganda on his old friend's behalf. Press and officialdom both felt his influence, and he even succeeded in interesting scientists in the East, many of whom came to California to study the plague and investigate the anti-fever bacillus which Clarendon was so rapidly isolating and perfecting. These doctors and biologists, however, did not obtain the information they wished; so that several of them left with a very unfortunate impression. Not a few prepared articles hostile to Clarendon, accusing him of an unscientific and fame-seeking attitude, and intimating that he concealed his methods through a highly unprofessional desire for ultimate personal profit.

Others, fortunately, were more liberal in their judgments, and wrote enthusiastically of Clarendon and his work. They had seen the patients, and could appreciate how marvelously he held the dread disease in leash. His secrecy regarding the antitoxin they deemed quite justifiable, since its public diffusion in unperfected form could not but do more harm than good. Clarendon himself, whom many of their number had met before, impressed them more profoundly than ever, and they did not hesitate to compare him with Jenner, Lister, Koch, Pasteur, Metchnikoff, and the rest of those whose whole lives have served pathology and humanity. Dalton was careful to save for Alfred all the magazines that spoke well of him, bringing them in person as an excuse to see Georgina. They did not, however, produce much effect save a contemptuous smile; and Clarendon would generally throw them to Surama, whose deep, disturbing chuckle upon reading formed a close parallel to the doctor's own ironic amusement.

One Monday evening early in February Dalton called with the definite intention of asking Clarendon for his sister's hand. Georgina herself admitted him to the grounds, and as they walked toward the house he stopped to pat the great dog which rushed up and laid friendly forepaws on his breast. It was Dick, Georgina's cherished St. Bernard, and Dalton was glad to feel that he had the affection of a creature which meant so much to her.

Dick was excited and glad, and turned the governor nearly half about with his vigorous pressure as he gave a soft quick bark and sprang off

through the trees toward the clinic. He did not vanish, though, but presently stopped and looked back, softly barking again as if he wished Dalton to follow. Georgina, fond of obeying her huge pet's playful whims, motioned to James to see what he wanted; and they both walked slowly after him as he trotted relievedly to the rear of the yard where the top of the clinic building stood silhouetted against the stars above the great brick wall.

The outline of lights within showed around the edges of the dark window-curtains, so they knew that Alfred and Surama were at work. Suddenly from the interior came a thin, subdued sound like a cry of a child—a plaintive call of "Mamma! Mamma!" at which Dick barked, while James and Georgina started perceptibly. Then Georgina smiled, remembering the parrots that Clarendon always kept for experimental uses, and patted Dick on the head either to forgive him for having fooled her and Dalton, or to console him for having been fooled himself.

As they turned slowly toward the house Dalton mentioned his resolve to speak to Alfred that evening about their engagement, and Georgina supplied no objection. She knew that her brother would not relish the loss of a faithful manager and companion, but believed his affection would place no barrier in the way of her happiness.

Later that evening Clarendon came into the house with a springy step and aspect less grim than usual. Dalton, seeing a good omen in this easy buoyancy, took heart as the doctor wrung his hand with a jovial "Ah, Jimmy, how's politics this year?" He glanced at Georgina, and she quietly excused herself, while the two men settled down to a chat on general subjects. Little by little, amidst many reminders of their old youthful days, Dalton worked toward his point; till at last he came out plainly with the crucial query.

"Alf, I want to marry Georgina. Have we your blessing?"

Keenly watching his old friend, Dalton saw a shadow steal over his face. The dark eyes flashed for a moment, then veiled themselves as wonted placidity returned. So science or selfishness was at work after all!

"You're asking an impossibility, James. Georgina isn't the aimless butterfly she was years ago. She has a place in the service of truth and

mankind now, and that place is here. She's decided to devote her life to my work—to the household that makes my work possible—and there's no room for desertion or personal caprice."

Dalton waited to see if he had finished. The same old fanaticism—humanity versus the individual—and the doctor was going to let it spoil his sister's life! Then he tried to answer.

"But look here, Alf, do you mean to say that Georgina, in particular, is so necessary to your work that you must make a slave and martyr of her? Use your sense of proportion, man! If it were a question of Surama or somebody in the utter thick of your experiments it might be different; but after all, Georgina is only a house-keeper to you in the last analysis. She has promised to be my wife and says that she loves me. Have you the right to cut her off from the life that belongs to her? Have you the right—"

"That'll do, James!" Carendon's face was set and white. "Whether or not I have the right to govern my own family is no business of an outsider."

"Outsider—you can say that to a man who—" Dalton almost choked as the steely voice of the doctor interrupted him again.

"An outsider to my family, and from now on an outsider to my home. Dalton, your presumption goes just a little too far! Good evening, Governor!"

And Clarendon strode from the room without extending his hand.

Dalton hesitated for a moment, almost at a loss what to do, when presently Georgina entered. Her face showed that she had spoken with her brother, and Dalton took both her hands impetuously.

"Well, Georgie, what do you say? I'm afraid it's a choice between Alf and me. You know how I feel—you know how I felt before, when it was your father I was up against. What's your answer this time?"

He paused as she responded slowly.

"James, dear, do you believe that I love you?"

He nodded and pressed her hands expectantly.

"Then, if you love me, you'll wait a while. Don't think of Alf's rudeness. He's to be pitied. I can't tell you the whole thing now, but you know how worried I am—what with the strain of his work, the criti-

cisms, and the staring and cackling of that horrible creature Surama! I'm afraid he'll break down—he shows the strain more than anyone outside the family could tell. I can see it, for I've watched him all my life. He's changing—slowly bending under his burdens—and he puts on his extra brusqueness to hide it. You can see what I mean, can't you, dear?"

She paused, and Dalton nodded again, pressing one of her hands to his breast. Then she concluded.

"So promise me, dear, to be patient. I must stand by him; I must! I must!"

Dalton did not speak for a while, but his head inclined in what was almost a bow of reverence. There was more of Christ in this devoted woman that he had thought any human being possessed; and in the face of such love and loyalty he could do no urging.

Words of sadness and parting were brief; and James, whose blue eyes were misty, scarcely saw the gaunt clinic-man as the gate to the street was at last opened to him. But when it slammed to behind him he heard that blood-curdling chuckle he had come to recognize so well, and knew that Surama was there—Surama, whom Georgina had called her brother's evil genius. Walking away with a firm step, Dalton resolved to be watchful, and to act at the first sign of trouble.

Meanwhile San Francisco, the epidemic still on the lips of all, seethed with anti-Clarendon feeling. Actually the cases outside the penitentiary were very few, and confined almost wholly to the lower Mexican element whose lack of sanitation was a standing invitation to disease of every kind; but politicians and the people needed no more than this to confirm the attacks made by the doctor's enemies. Seeing that Dalton was immovable in his championship of Clarendon, the malcontents, medical dogmatists, and ward-healers turned their attention to the state legislature; lining up the anti-Clarendonists and the governor's old enemies with great shrewdness, and preparing to launch a law—with a veto-proof majority—transferring the authority for minor institutional appointments from the chief executive to the various boards or commissions concerned.

In the furtherance of this measure no lobbyist was more active than

Clarendon's chief assistant, Dr. Jones. Jealous of his superior from the first, he now saw an opportunity for turning matters to his liking; and he thanked fate for the circumstance—responsible indeed for his present position—of his relationship to the chairman of the prison board. The new law, if passed, would certainly mean the removal of Clarendon and the appointment of himself in his stead; so, mindful of his own interest, he worked hard for it. Jones was all that Clarendon was not—a natural politician and sycophantic opportunist who served his own advancement first and science only incidentally. He was poor, and avid for salaried position, quite in contrast to the wealthy and independent savant he sought to displace. So with a rat-like cunning and persistence he labored to undermine the great biologist above him, and was one day rewarded by the news that the new law was passed. Thenceforward the governor was powerless to make appointments to the state institutions, and the medical directorship of San Quentin lay at the disposal of the prison board.

Of all this legislative turmoil Clarendon was singularly oblivious. Wrapped wholly in matters of administration and research, he was blind to the treason of "that ass Jones" who worked by his side, and deaf to all the gossip of the warden's office. He had never in his life read the newspapers, and the banishment of Dalton from his house cut off his last real link with the world of outside events. With the naïveté of a recluse, he at no time thought of his position as insecure. In view of Dalton's loyalty, and of his forgiveness of even the greatest wrongs, as shown in his dealings with the elder Clarendon who had crushed his father to death on the stock exchange, the possibility of a gubernatorial dismissal was, of course, out of the question; nor could the doctor's political ignorance envisage a sudden shift of power which might place the matter of retention or dismissal in very different hands. Thereupon he merely smiled with satisfaction when Dalton left for Sacramento; convinced that his place in San Quentin and his sister's place in his household were alike secure from disturbance. He was accustomed to having what he wanted, and fancied his luck was still holding out.

The first week in March, a day or so after the enactment of the new

law, the chairman of the prison board called at San Quentin. Clarendon was out, but Dr. Jones was glad to show the august visitor—his own uncle, incidentally—through the great infirmary, including the fever ward made so famous by press and panic. By this time converted against his will to Clarendon's belief in the fever's non-contagiousness, Jones smilingly assured his uncle that nothing was to be feared, and encouraged him to inspect the patients in detail—especially a ghastly skeleton, once a very giant of bulk and vigor, who was, he insinuated, slowly and painfully dying because Clarendon would not administer the proper medicine.

"Do you mean to say," cried the chairman, "that Dr. Clarendon refuses to let the man have what he needs, knowing his life could be saved?"

"Just that," snapped Dr. Jones, pausing as the door opened to admit none other than Clarendon himself. Clarendon nodded coldly to Jones and surveyed the visitor, whom he did not know, with disapproval.

"Dr. Jones, I thought you knew this case was not to be disturbed at all. And haven't I said that visitors aren't to be admitted except by special permission?"

But the chairman interrupted before his nephew could introduce him.

"Pardon me, Dr. Clarendon, but am I to understand that you refuse to give this man the medicine that would save him?"

Clarendon glared coldly, and rejoined with steel in his voice.

"That's an impertinent question, sir. I am in authority here, and visitors are not allowed. Please leave the room at once."

The chairman, his sense of drama secretly tickled, answered with greater pomp and hauteur than were necessary.

"You mistake me, sir! I, not you, am master here. You are addressing the chairman of the prison board. I must say, moreover, that I deem your activity a menace to the welfare of the prisoners, and must request your resignation. Henceforth Dr. Jones will be in charge, and if you wish to remain until your formal dismissal you will take your orders from him."

It was Wilfred Jones's great moment. Life never gave him another such climax, and we need not grudge him this one. After all he was a small rather than a bad man, and he had only obeyed a small man's code

of looking to himself at all costs. Clarendon stood still, gazing at the speaker as if he thought him mad, till in another second the look of triumph on Dr. Jones's face convinced him that something important was indeed afoot. He was icily courteous as he replied.

"No doubt you are what you claim to be, sir. But fortunately my appointment came from the governor of the state, and can therefore be revoked only by him."

The chairman and his nephew both stared perplexedly, for they had not realized to what lengths unworldly ignorance can go. Then the older man, grasping the situation, explained at some length.

"Had I found that the current reports did you an injustice," he concluded, "I would have deferred action; but the case of this poor man and your own arrogant manner left me no choice. As it is—"

But Dr. Clarendon interrupted with a new razor-sharpness in his voice.

"As it is, I am the director in charge at present, and I ask you to leave this room at once."

The chairman reddened and exploded.

"Look here, sir, who do you think you're talking to? I'll have you chucked out of here—damn your impertinence!"

But he had time only to finish the sentence. Transformed by the insult to a sudden dynamo of hate, the slender scientist launched out with both fists in a burst of preternatural strength of which no one would have thought him capable. And if his strength was preternatural, his accuracy of aim was no less so; for not even a champion of the ring could have wrought a neater result. Both men—the chairman and Dr. Jones—were squarely hit; the one full in the face and the other on the point of the chin. Going down like felled trees, they lay motionless and unconscious on the floor; while Clarendon, now clear and completely master of himself, took his hat and cane and went out to join Surama in the launch. Only when seated in the moving boat did he at last give audible vent to the frightful rage that consumed him. Then, with face convulsed, he called down imprecations from the stars and the gulfs beyond the stars; so that even Surama shuddered, made an elder sign that no book of history records; and forgot to chuckle.

Georgina soothed her brother's hurt as best she could. He had come home mentally and physically exhausted and thrown himself on the library lounge; and in that gloomy room, little by little, the faithful sister had taken in the almost incredible news. Her consolations were instantaneous and tender, and she made him realize how vast, though unconscious, a tribute to his greatness the attacks, persecution, and dismissal all were. He had tried to cultivate the indifference she preached, and could have done so had personal dignity alone been involved. But the loss of scientific opportunity was more than he could calmly bear and he sighed again and again as he repeated how three months more of study in the prison might have given him at last the long-sought bacillus which would make all fever a thing of the past.

Then Georgina tried another mode of cheering, and told him that surely the prison board would send for him again if the fever did not abate, or if it broke out with increased force. But even this was ineffective, and Clarendon answered only in a string of bitter, ironic, and half-meaningless little sentences whose tone showed all too clearly how deeply despair and resentment had bitten.

"Abate? Break out again? Oh, it'll abate all right! At least, they'll think it has abated. They'd think anything, no matter what happens! Ignorant eyes see nothing, and bunglers are never discoverers. Science never shows her face to that sort. And they call themselves doctors! Best of all, fancy that ass Jones in charge!"

Ceasing with a quick sneer, he laughed so demoniacally that Georgina shivered.

The days that followed were dismal ones indeed at the Clarendon mansion. Depression, stark and unrelieved, had taken hold of the doctor's usually tireless mind; and he would even have refused food had not Georgina forced it upon him. His great notebook of observations lay unopened on the library table, and his little gold syringe of anti-fever serum—a clever device of his own, with a self-contained reservoir, attached to a broad gold finger ring, and single-pressure action peculiar to itself—rested idly in a small leather case beside it. Vigor, ambition, and the desire for study and observation seemed to have died within him; and

he made no inquiries about his clinic, where hundreds of germ cultures stood in their orderly phials awaiting his attention.

The countless animals held for experiments played, lively and well-fed, in the early spring sunshine; and as Georgina strolled out through the rose-arbor to the cages she felt a strangely incongruous sense of happiness about her. She knew, though, how tragically transient that happiness must be; since the start of new work would soon make all those small creatures unwilling martyrs to science. Knowing this, she glimpsed a sort of compensating element in her brother's inaction, and encouraged him to keep on in a rest he needed so badly. The eight Tibetan servants moved noiselessly about, each as impeccably effective as usual; and Georgina saw to it that the order of the household did not suffer because of the master's relaxation.

Study and starward ambition laid aside in slippered and dressing-gowned indifference, Clarendon was content to let Georgina treat him as an infant. He met her maternal fussiness with a slow, sad smile, and always obeyed her multitude of orders and precepts. A kind of faint, wistful felicity came over the languid household, amidst which the only dissenting note was supplied by Surama. He indeed was miserable, and looked often with sullen and resentful eyes at the sunny serenity in Georgina's face. His only joy had been the turmoil of experiment, and he missed the routine of seizing the fated animals, bearing them to the clinic in clutching talons, and watching them with hot brooding gaze and evil chuckles as they gradually fell into the final coma with wide-opened, red-rimmed eyes, and swollen tongue lolling from froth-covered mouth.

Now he was seemingly driven to desperation by the sight of the care-free creatures in their cages, and frequently came to ask Clarendon if there were any orders. Finding the doctor apathetic and unwilling to begin work, he would go away muttering under his breath and glaring curses upon everything; stealing with catlike tread to his own quarters in the basement, where his voice would sometimes ascend in deep, muffled rhythms of blasphemous strangeness and uncomfortably ritualistic suggestion.

All this wore on Georgina's nerves, but not by any means so gravely

as her brother's continued lassitude itself. The duration of the state alarmed her, and little by little she lost the air of cheerfulness which had so provoked the clinic-man. Herself skilled in medicine, she found the doctor's condition highly unsatisfactory from an alienist's point of view; and she now feared as much from his absence of interest and activity as she had formerly feared from his fanatical zeal and overstudy. Was lingering melancholy about to turn the once brilliant man of intellect into an innocuous inbecile?

Then, toward the end of May, came the sudden change. Georgina always recalled the smallest details connected with it; details as trivial as the box delivered to Surama the day before, postmarked Algiers, and emitting a most unpleasant odor; and the sharp, sudden thunderstorm, rare in the extreme for California, which sprang up that night as Surama chanted his rituals behind his locked basement door in a droning chest-voice louder and more intense than usual.

It was a sunny day, and she had been in the garden gathering flowers for the dining-room. Re-entering the house, she glimpsed her brother in the library, fully dressed and seated at the table, alternately consulting the notes in his thick observation book, and making fresh entries with brisk assured strokes of the pen. He was alert and vital, and there was a satisfying resilience about his movements as he now and then turned a page, or reached for a book from the rear of the great table. Delighted and relieved, Georgina hastened to deposit her flowers in the dining-room and return; but when she reached the library again she found that her brother was gone.

She knew, of course, that he must be in the clinic at work, and rejoiced to think that his old mind and purpose had snapped back into place. Realizing it would be of no use to delay the luncheon for him, she ate alone and set aside a bite to be kept warm in case of his return at an odd moment. But he did not come. He was making up for lost time, and was still in the great stout-planked clinic when she went for a stroll through the rose-arbor.

As she walked among the fragrant blossoms she saw Surama fetching animals for the test. She wished she could notice him less. for he always

made her shudder; but her very dread had sharpened her eyes and ears where he was concerned. He always went hatless around the yard, and the total hairlessness of his head enhanced his skeletonlike aspect horribly. Now she heard a faint chuckle as he took a small monkey from its cage against the wall and carried it to the clinic, his long, bony fingers pressing so cruelly into its furry sides that it cried out in frightened anguish. The sight sickened her, and brought her walk to an end. Her inmost soul rebelled at the ascendancy this creature had gained over her brother, and she reflected bitterly that the two had almost changed places as master and servant.

Night came without Clarendon's return to the house, and Georgina concluded that he was absorbed in one of his very longest sessions, which meant total disregard of time. She hated to retire without a talk with him about his sudden recovery; but finally, feeling it would be futile to wait up, she wrote a cheerful note and propped it before his chair on the library table, then started resolutely for bed.

She was not quite asleep when she heard the outer door open and shut. So it had not been an all-night session after all! Determined to see that her brother had a meal before retiring she rose, slipped on a robe, and descended to the library, halting only when she heard voices from behind the half-opened door. Clarendon and Surama were talking, and she waited till the clinic-man might go.

Surama, however, showed no inclination to depart; and indeed, the whole heated tenor of the discourse seemed to bespeak absorption and promise length. Georgina, though she had not meant to listen, could not help catching a phrase now and then, and presently became aware of a sinister undercurrent which frightened her very much without being wholly clear to her. Her brother's voice, nervous, incisive, held her notice with disquieting persistence.

"But anyway," he was saying, "we haven't enough animals for another day, and you know how hard it is to get a decent supply at short notice. It seems silly to waste so much effort on comparative trash when human specimens could be had with just a little extra care."

Georgina sickened at the possible implication, and caught at the hall

rack to steady herself. Surama was replying in that deep, hollow tone which seemed to echo with the evil of a thousand ages and a thousand planets.

"Steady, steady—what a child you are with your haste and impatience! You crowd things so! When you've lived as I have, so that a whole life will seem only an hour, you won't be so fretful about a day or week or month! You work too fast. You've plenty of specimens in the cages for a full week if you'll only go at a sensible rate. You might even begin on the other material if you'd be sure not to overdo it."

"Never mind my haste!" the reply was snapped out sharply; "I have my own methods. I don't want to use our material if I can help it, for I prefer them as they are. And you'd better be careful of them anyway—you know the knives those sly dogs carry."

Surama's deep chuckle came.

"Don't worry about that. The brutes eat, don't they? Well, I can get you one any time you need it. But go slow—with the boy gone, there are only eight, and now that you've lost San Quentin it'll be hard to get new ones by the wholesale. I'd advise you to start in on Tsanpo—he's the least use to you as he is, and—"

But that was all Georgina heard. Transfixed by a hideous dread from the thoughts this talk excited, she nearly sank to the floor where she stood, and was scarcely able to drag herself up the stairs and into her room. What was the evil monster Surama planning? Into what was he guiding her brother? What monstrous circumstances lay behind these cryptic sentences? A thousand phantoms of darkness and menace danced before her eyes, and she flung herself upon the bed without hope of sleep. One thought above the rest stood out with fiendish prominence, and she almost screamed aloud as it beat itself into her brain with renewed force. Then nature, kinder than she expected, intervened at last. Closing her eyes in a dead faint, she did not awake till morning, nor did any fresh nightmare come to join the lasting one which the overheard words had brought.

With the morning sunshine came a lessening of the tension. What happens in the night when one is tired often reaches the consciousness in

distorted forms, and Georgina could see that her brain must have given strange color to scraps of common medical conversation. To suppose her brother—only son of the gentle Frances Schuyler Clarendon—guilty of savage sacrifices in the name of science would be to do an injustice to their blood, and she decided to omit all mention of her trip downstairs, lest Alfred ridicule her fantastic notions.

When she reached the breakfast table she found that Clarendon was already gone, and regretted that not even this second morning had given her a chance to congratulate him on his revived activity. Quietly taking the breakfast served by stone-deaf old Margarita, the Mexican cook, she read the morning paper and seated herself with some needlework by the sitting-room window overlooking the great yard. All was silent out there, and she could see that the last of the animal cages had been emptied. Science was served, and the lime pit held all that was left of the once pretty and lively little creatures. This slaughter had always grieved her, but she had never complained, since she knew it was all for humanity. Being a scientist's sister, she used to say to herself, was like being the sister of a soldier who kills to save his countrymen from their foes.

After luncheon Georgina resumed her post by the window, and had been busily sewing for some time when the sound of a pistol shot from the yard caused her to look out in alarm. There, not far from the clinic, she saw the ghastly form of Surama, a revolver in his hand, and his skull-face twisted into a strange expression as he chuckled at a cowering figure robed in black silk and carrying a long Tibetan knife. It was the servant Tsanpo, and as she recognized the shriveled face Georgina remembered horribly what she had overheard the night before. The sun flashed on the polished blade and suddenly Surama's revolver spat once more. This time the knife flew from the Mongol's hand, and Surama glanced greedily at his shaking and bewildered prey.

Then Tsanpo, glancing quickly at his unhurt hand and at the fallen knife, sprang nimbly away from the stealthily approaching clinic-man and made a dash for the house. Surama, however, was too swift for him, and caught him in a single leap, seizing his shoulder and almost crushing him. For a moment the Tibetan tried to struggle, but Surama lifted him

like an animal by the scruff of the neck and bore him off toward the clinic. Georgina heard him chuckling and taunting the man in his own tongue, and saw the yellow face of the victim twist and quiver with fright. Suddenly realizing against her own will what was taking place, a great horror mastered her and she fainted for the second time within twenty-four hours.

When consciousness returned, the golden light of late afternoon was flooding the room. Georgina, picking up her fallen work-basket and scattered materials, was lost in a daze of doubt; but finally felt convinced that the scene which had overcome her must have been all too tragically real. Her worst fears, then, were horrible truths. What to do about it, nothing in her experience could tell her; and she was vaguely thankful that her brother did not appear. She must talk to him, but not now. She could not talk to anybody now. And, thinking shudderingly of the monstrous happening behind those barred clinic windows, she crept into bed for a long night of anguished sleeplessness.

Rising haggardly on the following day, Georgina saw the doctor for the first time since his recovery. He was bustling about preoccupiedly, circulating between the house and the clinic, and paying little attention to anything besides his work. There was no chance for the dreaded interview, and Clarendon did not even notice his sister's worn-out aspect and hesitant manner.

In the evening she heard him in the library, talking to himself in a fashion most unusual for him, and she felt that he was under a great strain which might culminate in the return of his apathy. Entering the room, she tried to calm him without referring to any trying subject, and forced a steadying cup of bouillon upon him. Finally she asked gently what was distressing him, and waited anxiously for his reply, hoping to hear that Surama's treatment of the poor Tibetan had horrified and outraged him.

There was a note of fretfulness in his voice as he responded.

"What's distressing me? Good God, Georgina, what *isn't*? Look at the cages and see if you have to ask again! Cleaned out—milked dry—not a cursed specimen left; and a line of the most important bacterial

cultures incubating in their tubes without a chance to do an ounce of good! Days' work wasted—whole program set back—it's enough to drive a man mad! How shall I ever get anywhere if I can't scrape up some decent subjects?"

Georgina stroked his forehead.

"I think you ought to rest a while, Al dear."

He moved away.

"Rest? That's good! That's damn' good! What else have I been doing but resting and vegetating and staring blankly into space for the last fifty or a hundred or a thousand years? Just as I manage to shake off the clouds, I have to run short of material—and then I'm told to lapse back again into drooling stupefaction! God! And all the while some sneaking thief is probably working with my data and getting ready to come out ahead of me with the credit for my own work. I'll lose by a neck—some fool with the proper specimens will get the prize, when one week more with even half-adequate facilities would see me through with flying colors!"

His voice rose querulously, and there was an overtone of mental strain which Georgina did not like. She answered softly, yet not so softly as to hint at the soothing of a psychopathic case.

"But you're killing yourself with this worry and tension, and if you're dead, how can you do your work?"

He gave a smile that was almost a sneer.

"I guess a week or a month—all the time I need—wouldn't quite finish me, and it doesn't much matter what becomes of me or any other individual in the end. Science is what must be served—science—the austere cause of human knowledge. I'm like the monkeys and birds and guinea-pigs I use—just a cog in the machine, to be used to the advantage of the whole. They had to be killed—I may have to be killed—what of it? Isn't the cause we serve worth that and more?"

Georgina sighed. For a moment she wondered whether, after all, this ceaseless round of slaughter really was worth while.

"But are you absolutely sure your discovery will be enough of a boon to humanity to warrant these sacrifices?"

Clarendon's eyes flashed dangerously.

"Humanity! What the deuce is humanity? Science! Dolts! Just individuals over and over again! Humanity is made for preachers to whom it means the blindly credulous. Humanity is made for the predatory rich to whom it speaks in terms of dollars and cents. Humanity is made for the politician to whom it signifies collective power to be used to his advantage. What is humanity? Nothing! Thank God that crude illusion doesn't last! What a grown man worships is truth—knowledge—science—light—the rending of the veil and the pushing back of the shadow. Knowledge, the juggernaut! There is death in our own ritual. We must kill—dissect—destroy—and all for the sake of discovery—the worship of the ineffable light. The goddess Science demands it. We test a doubtful poison by killing. How else? No thought for self—just knowledge—the effect must be known."

His voice trailed off in a kind of temporary exhaustion, and Georgina shuddered slightly.

"But this is horrible, Al! You shouldn't think of it that way!"

Clarendon cackled sardonically, in a manner which stirred odd and repugnant associations in his sister's mind.

"Horrible? You think what I say is horrible? You ought to hear Surama! I tell you, things were known to the priests of Atlantis that would make you drop dead of fright if you heard a hint of them. Knowledge was knowledge a hundred thousand years ago, when our especial forebears were shambling about Asia as speechless semi-apes! They know something of it in the Hoggar region—there are rumors in the farther uplands of Tibet—and once I heard an old man in China calling on Yog-Sothoth—"

He turned pale, and made a curious sign in the air, with his extended forefinger. Georgina felt genuinely alarmed, but became somewhat calmer as his speech took a less fantastic form.

"Yes, it may be horrible, but it's glorious, too. The pursuit of knowledge, I mean. Certainly, there's no slovenly sentiment connected with it. Doesn't nature kill—constantly and remorselessly—and are any but fools horrified at the struggle? Killings are necessary. They are the glory of

science. We learn something from them, and we can't sacrifice learning to sentiment. Hear the sentimentalists howl against vaccination! They fear it will kill the child. Well, what if it does? How else can we discover the laws of disease concerned? As a scientist's sister you ought to know better than to prate sentiment. You ought to help my work instead of hindering it!"

"But, Al," protested Georgina, "I haven't the slightest intention of hindering your work. Haven't I always tried to help as much as I could? I am ignorant, I suppose, and can't help very actively; but at least I'm proud of you—proud for my own sake and for the family's sake—and I've always tried to smooth the way. You've given me credit for that many a time."

Clarendon looked at her keenly.

"Yes," he said jerkily as he rose and strode from the room, "you're right. You've always tried to help as best you knew. You may yet have a chance to help still more."

Georgina, seeing him disappear through the front door, followed him into the yard. Some distance away a lantern was shining through the trees, and as they approached it they saw Surama bending over a large object stretched on the ground. Clarendon, advancing, gave a short grunt; but when Georgina saw what it was she rushed up with a shriek. It was Dick, the great St. Bernard, and he was lying still with reddened eyes and protruding tongue.

"He's sick, Al!" she cried. "Do something for him, quick!"

The doctor looked at Surama, who had uttered something in a tongue unknown to Georgina.

"Take him to the clinic," he ordered; "I'm afraid Dick's caught the fever."

Surama took up the dog as he had taken poor Tsanpo the day before and carried him silently to the building near the mall. He did not chuckle this time, but glanced at Clarendon with what appeared to be real anxiety. It almost seemed to Georgina that Surama was asking the doctor to save her pet.

Clarendon, however made no move to follow, but stood still for a mo-

ment and then sauntered slowly toward the house. Georgina, astonished at such callousness, kept up a running fire of entreaties on Dick's behalf, but it was of no use. Without paying the slightest attention to her pleas he made directly for the library and began to read in a large old book which had lain face down on the table. She put her hand on his shoulder as he sat there, but he did not speak or turn his head. He only kept on reading, and Georgina, glancing curiously over his shoulder, wondered in what strange alphabet this brass-bound tome was written.

In the cavernous parlor across the hall, sitting alone in the dark a quarter of an hour later, Georgina came to her decision. Something was gravely wrong—just what, and to what extent, she scarcely dared formulate to herself—and it was time that she called in some stronger force to help her. Of course it must be James. He was powerful and capable, and his sympathy and affection would show him the right thing to do. He had known Al always, and would understand.

It was by this time rather late, but Georgina had resolved on action. Across the hall the light still shone from the library, and she looked wistfully at the doorway as she quietly donned a hat and left the house. Outside the gloomy mansion and forbidding grounds, it was only a short walk to Jackson Street, where by good luck she found a carriage to take her to the Western Union telegraph office. There she carefully wrote out a message to James Dalton in Sacramento, asking him to come at once to San Francisco on a matter of the greatest importance to them all.

Dalton was frankly perplexed by Georgina's sudden message. He had had no word from the Clarendons since that stormy February evening when Alfred had declared him an outsider to his home; and he in turn had studiously refrained from communicating, even when he had longed to express sympathy after the doctor's summary ousting from office. He had fought hard to frustrate the politicians and keep the appointive power, and was bitterly sorry to watch the unseating of a man who, despite recent estrangements, still represented to him the ultimate ideal of scientific competence.

Now, with this clearly frightened summons before him, he could not

imagine what had happened. He knew, though, that Georgina was not one to lose her head or send forth a needless alarm; hence he wasted no time, but took the Overland which left Sacramento within the hour, going at once to his club and sending word to Georgina by a messenger that he was in town and wholly at her service.

Meanwhile things had been quiescent at the Clarendon home, notwithstanding the doctor's continued taciturnity and his absolute refusal to report on the dog's condition. Shadows of evil seemed omnipresent and thickening, but for the moment there was a lull. Georgina was relieved to get Dalton's message and learn that he was close at hand, and sent back word that she would call him when necessity arose. Amidst all the gathering tension some faint compensating element seemed manifest, and Georgina finally decided that it was the absence of the lean Tibetans, whose stealthy, sinuous ways and disturbing exotic aspect had always annoyed her. They had vanished all at once; and old Margarita, the sole visible servant left in the house, told her they were helping their master and Surama at the clinic.

The following morning—the 28th of May—long to be remembered—was dark and lowering, and Georgina felt the precarious calm wearing thin. She did not see her brother at all, but knew he was in the clinic hard at work at something despite the lack of specimens he had bewailed. She wondered how poor Tsanpo was getting along, and whether he had really been subjected to any serious inoculation, but it must be confessed that she wondered more about Dick. She longed to know whether Surama had done anything for the faithful dog amidst his master's oddly callous indifference. Surama's apparent solicitude on the night of Dick's seizure had impressed her greatly, giving her perhaps the kindest feeling she had ever had for the detested clinic-man. Now, as the day advanced, she found herself thinking more and more of Dick; till at last her harassed nerves, finding in this one detail a sort of symbolic summation of the whole horror that lay upon the household, could stand the suspense no longer.

Up to that time she had always respected Alfred's imperious wish that he never be approached or disturbed at the clinic; but as this fateful after-

noon advanced, her resolution to break through the barrier grew stronger and stronger. Finally she set out with determined face, crossing the yard and entering the unlocked vestibule of the forbidden structure with the fixed intention of discovering how the dog was or of knowing the reason for her brother's secrecy.

The inner door, as usual, was locked; and behind it she heard voices in heated conversation. When her knocking brought no response she rattled the knob as loudly as possible, but still the voices argued on unheeding. They belonged, of course, to Surama and her brother; and as she stood there trying to attract attention she could not help catch something of their drift. Fate had made her for the second time an eavesdropper, and once more the matter she overheard seemed likely to tax her mental poise and nervous endurance to their ultimate bounds. Alfred and Surama were plainly quarreling with increasing violence, and the purport of their speech was enough to arouse the wildest fears and confirm the gravest apprehensions. Georgina shivered as her brother's voice mounted shrilly to dangerous heights of fanatical tension.

"You, damn you—you're a fine one to talk defeat and moderation to me! Who started all this, anyway? Did I have any idea of your cursed devil-gods and elder world? Did I ever in my life think of your damned spaces beyond the stars and your crawling chaos Nyarlathotep? I was a normal scientific man, confound you, till I was fool enough to drag you out of the vaults with your devilish Atlantean secrets. You egged me on, and now you want to cut me off! You loaf around doing nothing and telling me to go slow when you might just as well as not be going out and getting material. You know damn well that I don't know how to go about such things, whereas you must have been an old hand at it before the earth was made. It's like you, you damned walking corpse, to start something you won't or can't finish!"

Surama's evil chuckle came.

"You're insane, Clarendon. That's the only reason I let you rave on when I could send you to hell in three minutes. Enough is enough, and you've certainly had enough material for any novice at your stage. You've had all I'm going to get you, anyhow! You're only a maniac on the sub-

ject now—what a cheap, crazy thing to sacrifice even your poor sister's pet dog, when you could have spared him as well as not! You can't look at any living thing now without wanting to jab that gold syringe into it. No—Dick had to go where the Mexican boy went—where Tsanpo and the other seven went—where all the animals went! What a pupil! You're no fun any more—you've lost your nerve. You set out to control things, and they're controlling you. I'm about done with you, Clarendon. I thought you had the stuff in you, but you haven't. It's about time I tried somebody else. I'm afraid you'll have to go!"

In the doctor's shouted reply there was both fear and frenzy.

"Be careful, you—! There are powers against your powers—I didn't go to China for nothing, and there are things in Alhazred's *Azif* which weren't known in Atlantis! We've both meddled in dangerous things, but you needn't think you know all my resources. How about the Nemesis of Flame? I talked in Yemen with an old man who had come back alive from the Crimson Desert—he had seen Irem, the City of Pillars, and had worshipped at the underground shrines of Nug and Yeb—Ia! Shub-Niggurath!"

Through Clarendon's shrieking falsetto cut the deep chuckle of the .clinic-man.

"Shut up, you fool! Do you suppose your grotesque nonsense had any weight with me? Words and formulae—words and formulae—what do they all mean to one who has the substance behind them? We're in a material sphere now, and subject to material laws. You have your fever; I have my revolver. You'll get no specimens, and I'll get no fever so long as I have you in front of me with this gun between!"

That was all Georgina could hear. She felt her senses reeling, and staggered out of the vestibule for a saving breath of the lowering outside air. She saw that the crisis had come at last, and that help must now arrive quickly if her brother was to be saved from the unknown gulfs of madness and mystery. Summoning up all her reserve energy, she managed to reach the house and get to the library, where she scrawled a hasty note for Margarita to take to James Dalton.

When the old woman had gone, Georgina had just strength enough

to cross to the lounge and sink weakly down into a sort of semi-stupor. There she lay for what seemed like years, conscious only of the fantastic creeping up of the twilight from the lower corners of the great, dismal room, and plagued by a thousand shadowy shapes of terror which filed with fantasmal, half-limned pageantry through her tortured and stifled brain. Dusk deepened into darkness, and still the spell held. Then a firm tread sounded in the hall, and she heard someone enter the room and fumble at the match-safe. Her heart almost stopped beating as the gas-jets of the chandelier flared up one by one, but then she saw that the arrival was her brother. Relieved to the bottom of her heart that he was still alive, she gave vent to an involuntary sigh, profound, long-drawn, and tremulous, and lapsed at last into kindly oblivion.

At the sound of that sigh Clarendon turned in alarm toward the lounge, and was inexpressibly shocked to see the pale and unconscious form of his sister there. Her face had a deathlike quality that frightened his inmost spirit, and he flung himself on his knees by her side, awake to a realization of what her passing away would mean to him. Long unused to private practise amidst his ceaseless quest for truth, he had lost the physician's instinct of first aid, and could only call out her name and chafe her wrists mechanically as fear and grief possessed him. Then he thought of water, and ran to the dining-room for a carafe. Stumbling about in a darkness which seemed to harbor vague terrors, he was some time in finding what he sought; but at last he clutched it in shaking hand and hastened back to dash the cold fluid in Georgina's face. The method was crude but effective. She stirred, sighed a second time, and finally opened her eyes.

"You are alive!" he cried, and put his cheek to hers as she stroked his head maternally. She was almost glad she had fainted, for the circumstance seemed to have dispelled the strange Alfred and brought her own brother back to her. She sat up slowly and tried to reassure him.

"I'm all right, Al. Just give me a glass of water. It's a sin to waste it this way—to say nothing of spoiling my waist! Is that the way to behave every time your sister drops off for a nap? You needn't think I'm going to be sick, for I haven't time for such nonsense!"

Alfred's eyes showed that her cool, common-sense speech had had its effect. His brotherly panic dissolved in an instant, and instead there came into his face a vague, calculating expression, as if some marvelous possibility had just dawned upon him. As she watched the subtle waves of cunning and appraisal pass fleetingly over his countenance she became less and less certain that her mode of reassurance had been a wise one, and before he spoke she found herself shivering at something she could not define. A keen medical instant almost told her that his moment of sanity had passed, and that he was now once more the unrestrained fanatic for scientific research. There was something morbid in the quick narrowing of his eyes at her casual mention of good health. What was he thinking? To what unnatural extreme was his passion for experiment about to be pushed? Wherein lay the special significance of her pure blood and absolutely flawless organic state? None of these misgivings, however, troubled Georgina for more than a second, and she was quite natural and unsuspecting as she felt her brother's steady fingers at her pulse.

"You're a bit feverish, Georgie," he said in a precise, elaborately restrained voice as he looked professionally into her eyes.

"Why, nonsense, I'm all right," she replied. "One would think you were on the watch for fever patients just for the sake of showing off your discovery! It *would* be poetic, though, if you could make your final proof and demonstration by curing your own sister!"

Clarendon started violently and guiltily. Had she suspected his wish? Had he muttered anything aloud? He looked at her closely, and saw that she had no inkling of the truth. She smiled up sweetly into his face and patted his hand as he stood by the side of the lounge. Then he took a small oblong leather case from his vest pocket, and taking out a little gold syringe, he began fingering it thoughtfully, pushing the piston speculatively in and out of the empty cylinder.

"I wonder," he began with suave sententiousness, "whether you would really be willing to help science in—something like that way—if the need arose? Whether you would have the devotion to offer yourself to the cause of medicine as a sort of Jephthah's daughter if you knew it meant the absolute perfection and completion of my work?"

Georgina, catching the odd and unmistakable glitter in her brother's eyes, knew at last that her worst fears were true. There was nothing to do now but keep him quiet at all hazards and to pray that Margarita had found James Dalton at his club.

"You look tired, Al dear," she said gently. "Why not take a little morphia and get some of the sleep you need so badly?"

He replied with a kind of crafty deliberation.

"Yes, you're right, I'm worn out, and so are you. Each of us needs a good sleep. Morphine is just the thing—wait till I go and fill the syringe and we'll both take a proper dose."

Still fingering the empty syringe, he walked softly out of the room. Georgina looked about her with the aimlessness of desperation, ears alert for any sign of possible help. She thought she heard Margarita again in the basement kitchen, and rose to ring the bell, in an effort to learn of the fate of her message. The old servant answered her summons at once, and declared she had given the message at the club hours ago. Governor Dalton had been out, but the clerk had promised to deliver the note at the very moment of his arrival.

Margarita waddled below stairs again, but still Clarendon did not reappear. What was he doing? What was he planning? She had heard the outer door slam, so knew he must be at the clinic. Had he forgotten his original intention with the vacillating mind of madness? The suspense grew almost unbearable, and Georgina had to keep her teeth clenched tightly to avoid screaming.

It was the gate bell, which rang simultaneously in house and clinic, that broke the tension at last. She heard the catlike tread of Surama on the walk as he left the clinic to answer it; and then, with an almost hysterical sigh of relief, she caught the firm, familiar accents of Dalton in conversation with the sinister attendant. Rising, she almost tottered to meet him as he loomed up in the library doorway; and for a moment no word was spoken while he kissed her hand in his courtly, old-school fashion. Then Georgina burst forth into a torrent of hurried explanation, telling all that had happened, all she had glimpsed and overheard, and all she feared and suspected.

Dalton listened gravely and comprehendingly, his first bewilderment

gradually giving place to astonishment, sympathy, and resolution. The message, held by a careless clerk, had been slightly delayed, and had found him appropriately enough in the midst of a warm lounging-room discussion about Clarendon. A fellow-member, Dr. MacNeil, had brought in a medical journal with an article well calculated to disturb the devoted scientist, and Dalton had just asked to keep the paper for future reference when the message was handed him at last. Abandoning his half-formed plan to take Dr. MacNeil into his confidence regarding Alfred, he called at once for his hat and stick, and lost not a moment in getting a cab for the Clarendon home.

Surama, he thought, appeared alarmed at recognizing him; though he had chuckled as usual when striding off again toward the clinic. Dalton always recalled Surama's stride and chuckle on this ominous night, for he was never to see the unearthly creature again. As the chuckler entered the clinic vestibule his deep, guttural gurgles seemed to blend with some low mutterings of thunder which troubled the far horizon.

When Dalton had heard all Georgina had to say, and learned that Alfred was expected back at any moment with an hypodermic dose of morphine, he decided he had better talk with the doctor alone. Advising Georgina to retire to her room and await developments, he walked about the gloomy library, scanning the shelves and listening for Clarendon's nervous footstep on the clinic path outside. The vast room's corners were dismal despite the chandelier, and the closer Dalton looked at his friend's choice of books the less he liked them. It was not the balanced collection of a normal physician, biologist, or man of general culture. There were too many volumes on doubtful borderland themes; dark speculations and forbidden rituals of the Middle Ages, and strange exotic mysteries in alien alphabets both known and unknown.

The great notebook of observations on the table was unwholesome, too. The handwriting had a neurotic cast, and the spirit of the entries was far from reassuring. Long passages were inscribed in crabbed Greek characters, and as Dalton marshaled his linguistic memory for their translation he gave a sudden start, and wished his college struggles with

Xenophon and Homer had been more conscientious. There was something wrong—something hideously wrong—here, and the governor sank limply into the chair by the table as he pored more and more closely over the doctor's barbarous Greek. Then a sound came, startlingly near, and he jumped nervously at a hand laid sharply on his shoulder.

"What, may I ask, is the cause of this intrusion? You might have stated your business to Surama."

Clarendon was standing icily by the chair, the little gold syringe in one hand. He seemed very calm and rational, and Dalton fancied for a moment that Georgina must have exaggerated his condition. How, too, could a rusty scholar be absolutely sure about these Greek entries? The governor decided to be very cautious in his interview, and thanked the lucky chance which had placed a specious pretext in his coat pocket. He was very cool and assured as he rose to reply.

"I didn't think you'd care to have things dragged before a subordinate, but I thought you ought to see this article at once."

He drew forth the magazine given him by Dr. MacNeil and handed it to Clarendon.

"On page 542—you see the heading, 'Black Fever Conquered by New Serum.' It's by Dr. Miller of Philadelphia—and he thinks he's got ahead of you with your cure. They were discussing it at the club, and MacNeil thought the exposition very convincing. I, as a layman, couldn't pretend to judge; but at all events I thought you oughtn't to miss a chance to digest the thing while it's fresh. If you're busy, of course, I won't disturb you—"

Clarendon cut in sharply.

"I'm going to give my sister an hypodermic—she's not quite well—but I'll look at what that quack has to say when I get back. I know Miller—a damn sneak and incompetent—and I don't believe he has the brains to steal my methods from the little he's seen of them."

Dalton suddenly felt a wave of intuition warning him that Georgina must not receive that intended dose. There was something sinister about it. From what she had said, Alfred must have been an inordinately long

time preparing it, far longer than was needed for the dissolving of a morphine tablet. He decided to hold his host as long as possible, meanwhile testing his attitude in a more or less subtle way.

"I'm sorry Georgina isn't well. Are you sure that the injection will do her good? That it won't do her any harm?"

Clarendon's spasmodic start showed that something had been struck home.

"Do her harm?" he cried. "Don't be absurd! You know Georgina must be in the best of health—the very best, I say—in order to serve science as a Clarendon should serve it. She, at least, appreciates the fact that she is my sister. She deems no sacrifice too great in my service. She is a priestess of truth and discovery, as I am a priest."

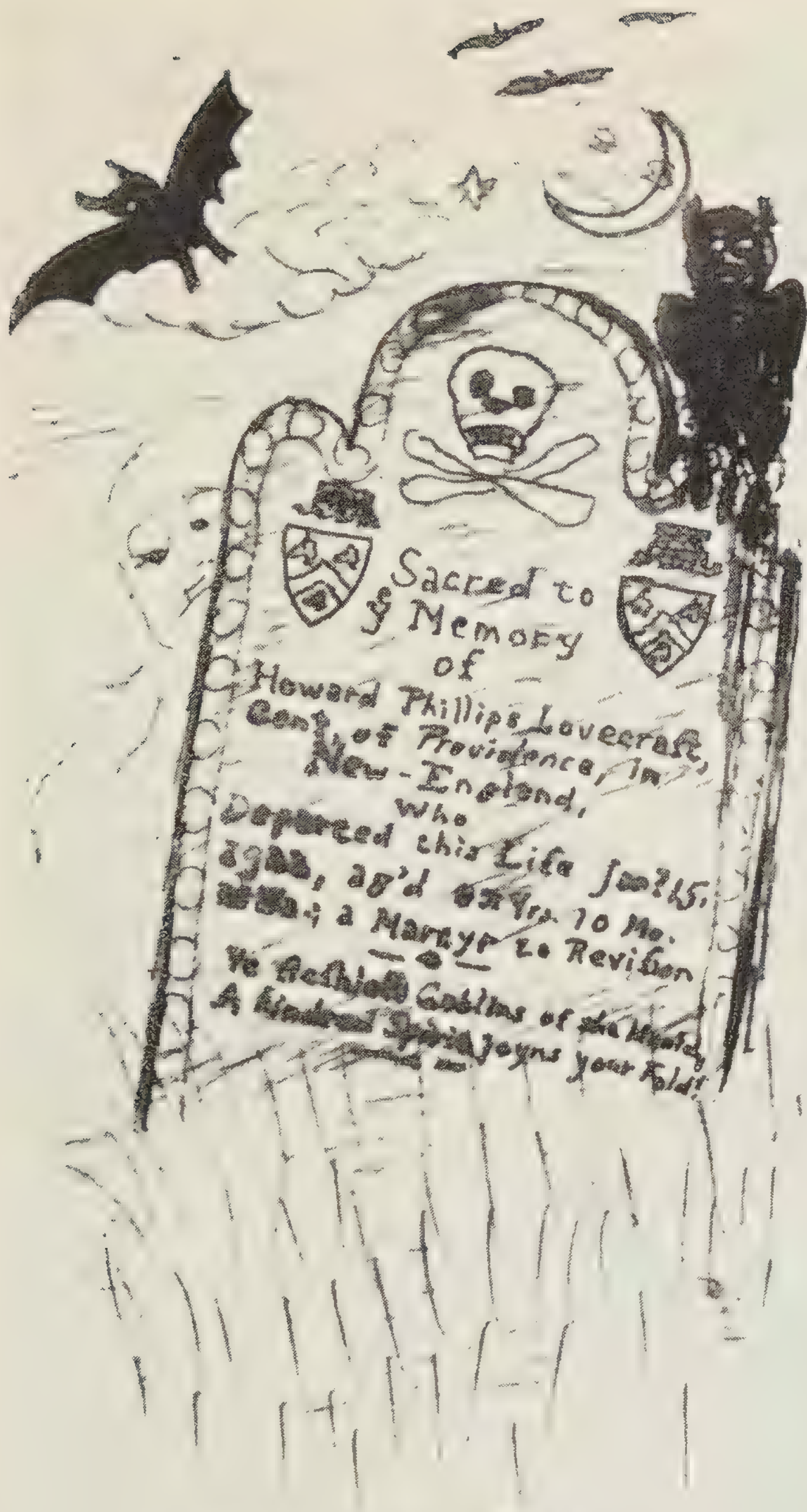
He paused in his shrill tirade, wild-eyed, and somewhat out of breath. Dalton could see that his attention had been momentarily shifted.

"But let me see what this cursed quack has to say," he continued. "If he thinks his pseudo-medical rhetoric can take a real doctor in, he is even simpler than I thought!"

Clarendon nervously found the right page and began reading as he stood there clutching his syringe. Dalton wondered what the real facts were. MacNeil had assured him that the author was a pathologist of the highest standing, and that whatever errors the article might have, the mind behind it was powerful, erudite, and absolutely honorable and sincere.

Watching the doctor as he read, Dalton saw the thin, bearded face suddenly grow pale. The great eyes blazed, and the pages crackled in the tenser grip of the long, lean fingers. A perspiration broke out on the high, ivory-white forehead where the hair was already thinning, and the reader sank gaspingly into the chair his visitor had vacated as he kept on with his devouring of the text. Then came a wild scream as from a haunted beast, and Clarendon lurched forward on the table, his outflung arms sweeping books and paper before them as consciousness went dark like a wind-quenched candle-flame.

Dalton, springing to help his stricken friend, raised the slim form and tilted it back in the chair. Seeing the carafe on the floor near the



Design for my
Gravestone.

A spoof at the expense of his revision work, penned on the back of an envelope sent to a client, Zealia Brown Reed Bishop.

The above is a sketch of the
 plant + its fruit as seen from
 below. It is a small tree or
 shrub, about 10 ft. tall,
 with many branches. The
 leaves are small, oval-shaped,
 and have a serrated margin.
 The fruit is a small, round,
 green berry, which is shown
 hanging from the end of a
 branch. The drawing is done
 in pencil on a piece of paper.

King Penguin
4 eggs in cup - 4 is covered
with 20 lb.

March 11 Day

10

TUESDAY

1911

Typical Lovecraft notes, together with a drawing of one of the beings in *At the Mountains of Madness*. From microfilm.

lounge, he dashed some water into the twisted face, and was rewarded by seeing the large eyes slowly open. They were sane eyes now—deep and sad and unmistakably sane—and Dalton felt awed in the presence of a tragedy whose ultimate depth he could never hope or dare to plumb.

The golden hypodermic was still clutched in the lean left hand, and as Clarendon drew a deep, shuddering breath he unclosed his fingers and studied the glittering thing that rolled about on his palm. Then he spoke—slowly, and with the ineffable sadness of utter, absolute despair.

"Thanks, Jimmy, I'm quite all right. But there's much to be done. You asked me a while back if this shot of morphia would do Georgie any harm. I'm in a position now to tell you that it won't."

He turned a small screw in the syringe and laid a finger on the piston, at the same time pulling with his left hand at the skin of his own neck. Dalton cried out in alarm as a lightning motion of his right hand injected the contents of the cylinder into the ridge of distended flesh.

"Good Lord, Al, what have you done?"

Clarendon smiled gently—a smile almost of peace and resignation, different indeed from the sardonic sneer of the past few weeks.

"You ought to know, Jimmy, if you've still the judgment that made you a governor. You must have pieced together enough from my notes to realize that there's nothing else to do. With your marks in Greek back at Columbia I guess you couldn't have missed much. All I can say is that it's true.

"James, I don't like to pass blame along, but it's only right to tell you that Surama got me into this. I can't tell you who or what he is, for I don't fully know myself, and what I do know is stuff that no sane person ought to know; but I will say that I don't consider him a human being in the fullest sense, and that I'm not sure whether or not he's alive as we know life.

"You think I'm talking nonsense. I wish I were, but the whole hideous mess is damnably real. I started out in life with a clean mind and purpose. I wanted to rid the world of fever. I tried and failed—and I wish to God I had been honest enough to say that I'd failed. Don't let

my old talk of science deceive you, James—I found no antitoxin and was never even half on the track of one!

"Don't look so shaken up, old fellow! A veteran politician-fighter like you must have seen plenty of unmaskings before. I tell you, I never had even the start of a fever cure. But my studies had taken me into some queer places, and it was just my damned luck to listen to the stories of some still queerer people. James, if you ever wish any man well, tell him to keep clear of the ancient, hidden places of the earth. Old backwaters are dangerous—things are handed down there that don't do healthy people any good. I talked too much with old priests and mystics, and got to hoping I might achieve things in dark ways that I couldn't achieve in lawful ways.

"I shan't tell you just what I mean, for if I did I'd be as bad as the old priests that were the ruin of me. All I need say is that after what I've learned I shudder at the thought of the world and what it's been through. The world is cursed old, James, and there have been whole chapters lived and closed before the dawn of our organic life and the geologic eras connected with it. It's an awful thought—whole forgotten cycles of evolution with beings and races and wisdom and diseases—all lived through and gone before the first ameba ever stirred in the tropic seas geology tells us about.

"I said gone, but I didn't quite mean that. It would have been better that way, but it wasn't quite so. In places traditions have kept on—I can't tell you how—and certain archaic life-forms have managed to struggle thinly down the eons in hidden spots. There were cults, you know—bands of evil priests in lands now buried under the sea. Atlantis was the hotbed. That was a terrible place. If heaven is merciful, no one will ever drag up that horror from the deep.

"It had a colony, though, that didn't sink; and when you get too confidential with one of the Tuareg priests in Africa, he's likely to tell you wild tales about it—tales that connect up with whispers you'll hear among the mad lamas and flighty yak-drivers on the secret table-lands of Asia. I'd heard all the common tales and whispers when I came on the big one. What that was, you'll never know—but it pertained to

somebody or something that had come down from a blasphemously long time ago, and could be made to live again—or seem alive again—through certain processes that weren't very clear to the man who told me.

"Now, James, in spite of my confession about the fever, you know I'm not bad as a doctor. I plugged hard at medicine, and soaked up about as much as the next man—maybe a little more, because down there in the Hoggar country I did something no priest had ever been able to do. They led me blindfolded to a place that had been sealed up for generations—and I came back with Surama.

"Easy, James! I know what you want to say. How does he know all he knows?—why does he speak English—or any other language, for that matter—without an accent?—why did he come away with me?—and all that. I can't tell you altogether, but I can say that he takes in ideas and images and impressions with something besides his brain and senses. He had a use for me and my science. He told me things, and opened up vistas. He taught me to worship ancient, primordial, and unholy gods, and mapped out a road to a terrible goal which I can't even hint to you. Don't press me, James—it's for the sake of your sanity and the world's sanity!

"The creature is beyond all bounds. He's in league with the stars and all the forces of nature. Don't think I'm still crazy, James—I swear to you I'm not! I've had too many glimpses to doubt. He gave me new pleasures that were forms of his palesgean worship, and the greatest of those was the black fever.

"God, James! Haven't you seen through the business by this time? Do you still believe the black fever come out of Tibet, and that I learned about it there? Use your brains, man! Look at Miller's article here! He's found a basic antitoxin that will end all fever within half a century, when other men learn how to modify it for the different forms. He's cut the ground of my youth from under me—done what I'd have given my life to do—taken the wind out of all the honest sails I ever flung to the breeze of science! Do you wonder his article gave me a turn? Do you wonder it shocks me out of my madness back to the old dreams of my youth? Too late! Too late! But not too late to save others!

"I guess I'm rambling a bit now, old man. You know—the hypodermic. I asked you why you didn't tumble to the facts about black fever. How could you, though? Doesn't Miller say he's cured seven cases with his serum? A matter of diagnosis, James. He only thinks it is black fever. I can read between his lines. Here, old chap, on page 584, is the key to the whole thing. Read it again.

"You see, don't you? The fever cases *from the Pacific Coast* didn't respond to his serum. They puzzled him. They didn't even seem like any true fever he knew. Well, those were *my* cases! Those were the *real* black fever cases! And there can't ever be an antitoxin on earth that'll cure black fever!

"How do I know? *Because black fever isn't of this earth!* It's from *somehow else*, James—and Sutama alone knows where, because he brought it here. He *brought it and I spread it!* That's the secret, James! That's all I wanted the appointment for—*that's all I ever did—just spread the fever that I carried in this gold syringe and in the deadlier jagged pump-syringe you see on my index finger!* Science! A blind! I wanted to kill, and kill, and kill! A single pressure of my finger, and the black fever was inoculated. I wanted to see living things wheeze and squirm, scream and froth at the mouth. A single pressure of the pump-syringe and I could watch them as they died, and I couldn't live or think unless I had plenty to watch. That's why I jabbed everything in sight with the accused hollow needle. Animals, criminals, children, servants—and the next would have been—"

Clarendon's voice broke, and he crumpled up perceptibly in his chair.

"That—that, James—was—my life. Sutama made it so—he taught me, and kept me at it till I couldn't stop. Then—then it got too much *even for him*. He tried to check me. Fancy—*he* trying to check anybody in that line! But now I've got my last specimen. That is my last test. Good subject, James—I'm healthy—devilish healthy. Deuced ironic, though—the madness has gone now, so there won't be any fun watching the agony! Can't be—can't—"

A violent shiver of fever racked the doctor, and Dalton murmured amidst his horror-superstition that he could give no grief. How much

of Alfred's story was sheer nonsense, and how much nightmare truth he could not say; but in any case he felt that the man was a victim rather than a criminal, and above all, he was a boyhood comrade and Georgina's brother. Thought of the old days came back kaleidoscopically. "Little Alf"—the yard at Phillips Exeter—the quadrangle at Columbia—the fight with Tom Cortland when he saved Alf from a pommeling.

...

He helped Clarendon to the lounge and asked gently what he could do. There was nothing. Alfred could only whisper now, but he asked forgiveness for all his offenses, and commended his sister to the care of his friend.

"You—you'll—make her happy," he gasped. "She deserves it. Martyr—to—a myth! Make it up to her, James. Don't—let—her—know—more—than she has to!"

His voice trailed off in a mumble, and he fell into a stupor. Dalton rang the bell, but Margarita had gone to bed, so he called up the stairs for Georgina. She was firm of step, but very pale. Alfred's scream had tried her sorely, but she had trusted James. She trusted him still as he showed her the unconscious form on the lounge and asked her to go back to her room and rest, no matter what sounds she might hear. He did not wish her to witness the awful spectacle of delirium certain to come, but bade her kiss her brother a final farewell as he lay there calm and still, very like the delicate boy he had once been. So she left him—the strange, moonstruck, star-reading genius she had mothered so long—and the picture she carried away was a very merciful one.

Dalton must bear to his grave a sterner picture. His fears of delirium were not vain, and all through the black midnight hours his giant strength restrained the frenzied contortions of the mad sufferer. What he heard from those swollen, blackening lips he will never repeat. He has never been quite the same man since, and he knows that no one who hears such things can ever be wholly as he was before. So, for the world's good, he dares not speak, and he thanks God that his layman's ignorance of certain subjects makes many of the revelations cryptic and meaningless to him.

Toward morning Clarendon suddenly woke to a sane consciousness and began to speak in a firm voice.

"James, I didn't tell you what must be done—about everything. Blot out these entries in Greek and send my notebook to Dr. Miller. All my other notes, too, that you'll find in the files. He's the big authority today—his article proves it. Your friend at the club was right.

"But everything in the clinic must go. *Everything without exception, dead or alive or—otherwise.* All the plagues of hell are in those bottles on the shelves. Burn them—burn it all—if one thing escapes, Surama will spread black death throughout the world. *And above all burn Surama!* That—that *thing*—must not breathe the wholesome air of heaven. You know now—what I told you—you know why such an entity can't be allowed on earth. It won't be murder—Surama isn't human—if you're as pious as you used to be, James, I shan't have to urge you. Remember the old text—'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'—or something of the sort.

"*Burn him, James!* Don't let him chuckle again over the torture of mortal flesh! I say, *burn him*—the Nemesis of Flame—that's all that can reach him, James, unless you can catch him asleep and drive a stake through his heart. . . . *Kill him—extirpate him—cleanse the decent universe of its primal taint—the taint I recalled from its age-long sleep. . . .*"

The doctor had risen on his elbow, and his voice was a piercing shriek toward the last. The effort was too much, however, and he lapsed very suddenly into a deep, tranquil coma. Dalton, himself fearless of fever since he knew the dread germ to be non-contagious, composed Alfred's arms and legs on the lounge and threw a light afghan over the fragile form. After all, mightn't much of this horror be exaggeration and delirium? Mightn't old Doc MacNeil pull him through on a long chance? The governor strove to keep awake, and walked briskly up and down the room, but his energies had been taxed too deeply for such measures. A second's rest in the chair by the table took matters out of his hands, and he was presently sleeping soundly despite his best intentions.

Dalton started up as a fierce light shone in his eyes, and for a moment he thought the dawn had come. But it was not the dawn, and as he rubbed his heavy lids he saw that it was the glare of the burning clinic in the yard, whose stout planks flamed and roared and crackled heavenward in the most stupendous holocaust he had ever seen. It was indeed the "Nemesis of Flame" that Clarendon had wished, and Dalton felt that some strange combustibles must be involved in a blaze so much wilder than anything normal pine or redwood could afford. He glanced alarmedly at the lounge, but Alfred was not there. Starting up, he went to call Georgina, but met her in the hall roused as he was by the mountain of living fire.

"The clinic's burning down!" she cried. "How is Al?"

"He's disappeared—disappeared while I dropped asleep!" replied Dalton, reaching out a steadying arm to the form which faintness had begun to sway.

Gently leading her upstairs toward her room, he promised to search at once for Alfred, but Georgina slowly shook her head as the flames from outside cast a weird glow through the window on the landing.

"He must be dead, James—he could never live, sane and knowing what he did. I heard him quarreling with Surama, and know that awful things were going on. He is my brother, but—it is best as it is."

Her voice had sunk to a whisper.

Suddenly through the open window came the sound of a deep, hideous chuckle, and the flames of the burning clinic took fresh contours till they half resembled some nameless, cyclopean creatures of nightmare. James and Georgina paused hesitant, and peered out breathlessly through the landing window. Then from the sky came a bolt of lightning shot down with terrible directness into the very midst of the blazing ruin. The deep chuckle ceased, and in its place came a frantic, ululant yelp as of a thousand ghouls and werewolves in torment. It died away with long, reverberant echoes, and slowly the flames resumed their normal shape.

The watchers did not move, but waited till the pillar of fire had shrunk to a smoldering glow. They were glad of a half-rusticity which

had kept the firemen from trooping out, and of the wall which excluded the curious. What had happened was not for vulgar eyes—it involved too much of the universe's inner secrets for that.

In the pale dawn, James spoke softly to Georgina, who could do no more than put her head on his breast and sob.

"Sweetheart, I think he has atoned. He must have set the fire, you know, while I was asleep. He told me it ought to be burned—the clinic, and everything in it, Surama, too. It was the only way to save the world from the unknown horrors he had loosed upon it. He knew, and he did what was best.

"He was a great man, Georgie. Let's never forget that. We must always be proud of him, for he started out to help mankind, and was titanic even in his sins. I'll tell you more sometime. What he did, be it good or evil, was what no man ever did before. He was the first and last to break through certain veils, and even Apollonius of Tyana takes second place beside him. But we mustn't talk about that. We must remember him only as the Little Alf we knew—as the boy who wanted to master medicine and conquer fever."

In the afternoon the leisurely firemen overhauled the ruins and found two skeletons with bits of blackened flesh adhering—only two, thanks to the undisturbed lime-pits. One was of a man; the other is still a subject of debate among the biologists of the coast. It was not exactly an ape's or a saurian's skeleton, but it had disturbing suggestions of lines of evolution of which paleontology has revealed no trace. The charred skull, oddly enough, was very human, and reminded people of Surama; but the rest of the bones were beyond conjecture. Only well-cut clothing could have made such a body look like a man.

But the human bones were Clarendon's. No one disputed this, and the world at large still mourns the untimely death of the greatest doctor of his age; the bacteriologist whose universal fever serum would have far eclipsed Dr. Miller's kindred antitoxin had he lived to bring it to perfection. Much of Miller's late success, indeed, is credited to the notes bequeathed him by the hapless victim of the flames. Of the old rivalry and hatred almost none survived, and even Dr. Wilfred Jones

has been known to boast of his association with the vanished leader.

James Dalton and his wife Georgina have always preserved a reticence which modesty and family grief might well account for. They published certain notes as a tribute to the great man's memory, but have never confirmed or contradicted either the popular estimate or the rare hints of marvels that a very few keen thinkers have been known to whisper. It is very subtly and slowly that the facts have filtered out. Dalton probably gave Dr. MacNeil an inkling of the truth, and that good soul had not many secrets from his son.

The Daltons have led, on the whole, a very happy life; for their cloud of terror lies far in the background, and a strong mutual love has kept the world fresh for them. But there are things which disturb them oddly—little things, of which one would scarcely ever think of complaining. They can not bear persons who are lean or deep-voiced beyond certain limits, and Georgina turns pale at the sound of any guttural chuckling. Senator Dalton has a mixed horror of occultism, travel, hypodermics, and strange alphabets which most find hard to unify, and there are still those who blame him for the vast proportion of the doctor's library that he destroyed with such painstaking completeness.

MacNeil, though, seemed to realize. He was a simple man, and he said a prayer as the last of Alfred Clarendon's strange books crumbled to ashes. Nor would anyone who had peered understandingly within those books wish a word of that prayer unsaid.

The Electric Executioner

By ADOLPHE DE CASTRO

FOR ONE WHO has never faced the danger of legal execution, I have a rather queer horror of the electric chair as a subject. Indeed, I think the topic gives me more of a shudder than it gives many a man who has been on trial for his life. The reason is that I associate the thing with an incident of forty years ago—a very strange incident which brought me close to the edge of the unknown's black abyss.

In 1889 I was an auditor and investigator connected with the Tlaxcala Mining Company of San Francisco, which operated several small silver and copper properties in the San Mateo Mountains in Mexico. There had been some trouble at Mine No. 3, which had a surly, furtive assistant superintendent named Arthur Feldon; and on August sixth the firm received a telegram saying that Feldon had decamped, taking with him all the stock records, securities, and private papers, and leaving the whole clerical and financial situation in dire confusion.

This development was a severe blow to the company, and late in the afternoon President McComb called me into his office to give orders for the recovery of the papers at any cost. There were, he knew, grave drawbacks. I had never seen Feldon, and there were only very indifferent photographs to go by. Moreover, my own wedding was set for Thursday of the following week—only nine days ahead—so that I was naturally not eager to be hurried off to Mexico on a man-hunt of indefinite length. The need, however, was so great that McComb felt justified in asking me to go at once; and I for my part decided that the effect on my status with the company would make ready acquiescence eminently worth while.

I was to start that night, using the president's private car as far as Mexico City, after which I would have to take a narrow-gage railway

to the mines. Jackson, the superintendent of No. 3, would give me all details and any possible clues upon my arrival; and then the search would begin in earnest—through the mountains, down to the coast, or among the byways of Mexico City, as the case might be. I set out with a grim determination to get the matter done—and successfully done—as swiftly as possible; and tempered my discontent with pictures of an early return with papers and culprit, and of a wedding which would be almost a triumphal ceremony.

Having notified my family, fiancée, and principal friends, and made hasty preparations for the trip, I met President McComb at eight P.M. at the Southern Pacific depot, received from him some written instructions and a check-book, and left in his car attached to the eight-fifteen eastbound transcontinental train. The journey that followed seemed destined for uneventfulness, and after a good night's sleep I revelled in the ease of the private car so thoughtfully assigned me; reading my instructions with care, and formulating plans for the capture of Feldon and the recovery of the documents. I knew the Tlaxcala country quite well—probably much better than the missing man—hence had a certain amount of advantage in my search unless he had already used the railway.

According to the instructions, Feldon had been a subject of worry to Superintendent Jackson for some time; acting secretively, and working unaccountably in the company's laboratory at odd hours. That he was implicated with a Mexican boss and several peons in some thefts of ore was strongly suspected; but though the natives had been discharged, there was not enough evidence to warrant any positive step regarding the subtle official. Indeed, despite his furtiveness, there seemed to be more of defiance than of guilt in the man's bearing. He wore a chip on his shoulder, and talked as if the company were cheating him instead of his cheating the company. The obvious surveillance of his colleagues, Jackson wrote, appeared to irritate him increasingly; and now he had gone with everything of importance in the office. Of his possible whereabouts no guess could be made; though Jackson's final telegram suggested the wild slopes of the Sierra de Malinche, that tall, myth-sur-

rounded peak with the corpse-shaped silhouette, from whose neighborhood the thieving natives were said to have come.

At El Paso, which we reached at two A.M. of the night following our start, my private car was detached from the transcontinental train and joined to an engine specially ordered by telegraph to take it southward to Mexico City. I continued to drowse till dawn, and all the next day grew bored on the flat, desert Chihuahua landscape. The crew had told me we were due in Mexico City at noon Friday, but I soon saw that countless delays were wasting precious hours. There were waits on sidings all along the single-tracked route, and now and then a hot-box or other difficulty would further complicate the schedule.

At Torreón we were six hours late, and it was almost eight o'clock on Friday evening—fully twelve hours behind schedule—when the conductor consented to do some speeding in an effort to make up time. My nerves were on edge, and I could do nothing but pace the car in desperation. In the end I found that the speeding had been purchased at a high cost indeed, for within a half-hour the symptoms of a hotbox had developed in my car itself; so that after a maddening wait the crew decided that all the bearings would have to be overhauled after a quarter-speed limp ahead to the next station with shops—the factory town of Queretaro. This was the last straw, and I almost stamped like a child. Actually I sometimes caught myself pushing at my chair-arm as if trying to urge the train forward at a less snail-like pace.

It was almost ten in the evening when we drew into Queretaro, and I spent a fretful hour on the station platform while my car was sidetracked and tinkered at by a dozen native mechanics. At last they told me the job was too much for them, since the forward truck needed new parts which could not be obtained nearer than Mexico City. Everything indeed seemed against me, and I gritted my teeth when I thought of Feldon getting farther and farther away—perhaps to the easy cover of Vera Cruz with its shipping or Mexico City with its varied rail facilities—while fresh delays kept me tied and helpless. Of course Jackson had notified the police in all the cities around, but I knew with sorrow what their efficiency amounted to.

The best I could do, I soon found out, was to take the regular night express for Mexico City, which ran from Aguas Calientes and made a five-minute stop at Queretaro. It would be along at one A.M. if on time, and was due in Mexico City at five o'clock Saturday morning. When I purchased my ticket I found that the train would be made up of European compartment carriages instead of long American cars with rows of two-seat chairs. These had been much used in the early days of Mexican railroading, owing to the European construction interests back of the first lines; and in 1889 the Mexican Central was still running a fair number of them on its shorter trips. Ordinarily I prefer the American coaches, since I hate to have people facing me; but for this once I was glad of the foreign carriage. At such a time of night I stood a good chance of having a whole compartment to myself, and in my tired, nervously hypersensitive state I welcomed the solitude—as well as the comfortably upholstered seat with soft arm-rests and head-cushion, running the whole width of the vehicle. I bought a first class ticket, obtained my valise from the sidetracked private car, telegraphed both President McComb and Jackson of what had happened, and settled down in the station to wait for the night express as patiently as my strained nerves would let me.

For a wonder, the train was only half an hour late; though even so, the solitary station vigil had about finished my endurance. The conductor, showing me into a compartment, told me he expected to make up the delay and reach the capital on time; and I stretched myself comfortably on the forward-facing seat in the expectation of a quiet three-and-a-half hour run. The light from the overhead oil lamp was soothingly dim, and I wondered whether I could snatch some much-needed sleep in spite of my anxiety and nerve-tension. It seemed, as the train jolted into motion, that I was alone; and I was heartily glad of it. My thoughts leaped ahead to my quest, and I nodded with the accelerating rhythm of the speeding string of carriages.

Then suddenly I perceived that I was not alone after all. In the corner diagonally opposite me, slumped down so that his face was invisible, sat a roughly clad man of unusual size, whom the feeble light had

failed to reveal before. Beside him on the seat was a huge valise, battered and bulging, and tightly gripped even in his sleep by one of his incongruously slender hands. As the engine whistled sharply at some curve or crossing, the sleeper started nervously into a kind of watchful half-awakening; raising his head and disclosing a handsome face, bearded and clearly Anglo-Saxon, with dark, lustrous eyes. At sight of me his wakefulness became complete, and I wondered at the rather hostile wildness of his glance. No doubt, I thought, he resented my presence when he had hoped to have the compartment alone all the way; just as I was myself disappointed to find strange company in the half-lighted carriage. The best we could do, however, was to accept the situation gracefully; so I began apologizing to the man for my intrusion. He seemed to be a fellow-American, and we would both feel more at ease after a few civilities. Then we could leave each other in peace for the balance of the journey.

To my surprise, the stranger did not respond to my courtesies with so much as a word. Instead, he kept staring at me fiercely and almost appraisingly, and brushed aside my embarrassed proffer of a cigar with a nervous lateral movement of his disengaged hand. His other hand still tensely clutched the great, worn valise, and his whole person seemed to radiate some obscure malignity. After a time he abruptly turned his face toward the window, though there was nothing to see in the dense blackness outside. Oddly, he appeared to be looking at something as intently as if there really were something to look at. I decided to leave him to his own curious devices and meditations without further annoyance; so settled back in my seat, drew the brim of my soft hat over my face, and closed my eyes in an effort to snatch the sleep I had half-counted on.

I could not have dozed very long or very fully when my eyes fell open as if in response to some external force. Closing them again with some determination, I renewed my quest of a nap, yet wholly without avail. An intangible influence seemed bent on keeping me awake; so raising my head, I looked about the dimly lighted compartment to see if anything were amiss. All appeared normal, but I noticed that the stranger in the

opposite corner was looking at me very intently—intently, though without any of the geniality or friendliness which would have implied a change from his former surly attitude. I did not attempt conversation this time, but leaned back in my previous sleepy posture; half closing my eyes as if I had dozed off once more, yet continuing to watch him curiously from beneath my down-turned hat brim.

As the train rattled onward through the night I saw a subtle and gradual metamorphosis come over the expression of the staring man. Evidently satisfied that I was asleep, he allowed his face to reflect a curious jumble of emotions, the nature of which seemed anything but reassuring. Hatred, fear, triumph and fanaticism flickered compositely over the lines of his lips and the angles of his eyes while his gaze became a glare of really alarming greed and ferocity. Suddenly it dawned upon me that this man was mad and dangerously so.

I will not pretend that I was anything but deeply and thoroughly frightened when I saw how things stood. Perspiration started out all over me and I had hard work to maintain my attitude of relaxation and slumber. Life had many attractions for me just then and the thought of dealing with a homicidal maniac—possibly armed and certainly powerful to a marvelous degree—was a dismaying and terrifying one. My disadvantage in any sort of struggle was enormous; for the man was a virtual giant; evidently in the best of athletic trim, while I have always been rather frail, and was then almost worn out with anxiety, sleeplessness, and nervous tension. It was undeniably a bad moment for me, and I felt pretty close to a horrible death as I recognized the fury of madness in the stranger's eyes. Events from the past came up into my consciousness as if for a farewell—just as a drowning man's whole life is said to resurrect itself before him at the last moment.

Of course I had my revolver in my coat pocket, but any motion of mine to reach and draw it would be instantly obvious. Moreover, if I did secure it, there was no telling what effect it would have on the maniac. Even if I shot him once or twice he might have enough remaining strength to get the gun from me and deal with me in his own way; or if he were armed himself he might shoot or stab without trying to

disarm me. One can cow a sane man by covering him with a pistol, but an insane man's complete indifference to consequences gives him a strength and menace quite superhuman for the time being. Even in those pre-Freudian days I had a common-sense realization of the dangerous power of a person without normal inhibitions. That the stranger in the corner was indeed about to start some murderous action, his burning eyes and twitching facial muscles did not permit me to doubt for a moment.

Suddenly I heard his breath begin to come in excited gasps, and saw his chest heaving with mounting excitement. The time for a showdown was close, and I tried desperately to think of the best thing to do. Without interrupting my pretense of sleep, I began to slide my right hand gradually and inconspicuously toward the pocket containing my pistol; watching the madman closely as I did so, to see if he would detect any move. Unfortunately he did—almost before he had time to register the fact in his expression. With a bound so agile and abrupt as to be almost incredible in a man of his size, he was upon me before I knew what had happened; looming up and swaying forward like a giant ogre of legend, and pinioning me with one powerful hand while with the other he forestalled me in reaching the revolver. Taking it from my pocket and placing it in his own, he released me contemptuously, well knowing how fully his physique placed me at his mercy. Then he stood up at his full height—his head almost touching the roof of the carriage—and stared down at me with eyes whose fury had quickly turned to a look of pitying scorn and ghoulish calculation.

I did not move, and after a moment the man resumed his seat opposite me; smiling a ghastly smile as he opened his great bulging valise and extracted an article of peculiar appearance—a rather large cage of semi-flexible wire, woven somewhat like a baseball catcher's mask, but shaped more like the helmet of a diving-suit. Its top was connected with a cord whose other end remained in the valise. This device he fondled with obvious affection, cradling it in his lap as he looked at me afresh and licked his bearded lips with an almost feline motion of the tongue. Then, for the first time, he spoke—in a deep, mellow voice of a softness

and cultivation startlingly at variance with his rough corduroy clothes and unkempt aspect.

"You are fortunate, sir. I shall use you first of all. You shall go into history as the first fruits of a remarkable invention. Vast sociological consequences—I shall let my light shine, as it were. I'm radiating all the time, but nobody knows it. Now you shall know. Intelligent guinea-pig. Cats and burros—it worked even with a burro. . . ."

He paused, while his bearded features underwent a convulsive motion closely synchronized with a vigorous gyratory shaking of the whole head. It was as though he were shaking clear of some nebulous obstructing medium, for the gesture was followed by a clarification or subtilization of expression which hid the more obvious madness in a look of suave composure through which the craftiness gleamed only dimly. I glimpsed the difference at once, and put in a word to see if I could lead his mind into harmless channels.

"You seem to have a marvelously fine instrument, if I'm any judge. Won't you tell me how you came to invent it?"

He nodded.

"Mere logical reflection, dear sir. I consulted the needs of the age and acted upon them. Others might have done the same had their minds been as powerful—that is, as capable of sustained concentration—as mine. I had the sense of conviction—the available will-power—that is all. I realized, as no one else has yet realized, how imperative it is to remove everybody from the earth before Quetzalcoatl comes back, and realized also that it must be done elegantly. I hate butchery of any kind, and hanging is barbarously crude. You know last year the New York legislature voted to adopt electric execution for condemned men—but all the apparatus they have in mind is as primitive as Stephenson's 'Rocket' or Davenport's first electric engine. I knew of a better way, and told them so, but they paid no attention to me. God, the fools! As if I didn't know all there is to know about men and death and electricity—student, man and boy—technologist and engineer—soldier of fortune. . . ."

He leaned back and narrowed his eyes.

"I was in Maximilian's army twenty years and more ago. They were going to make me a nobleman. Then those damned greasers killed him and I had to go home. But I came back—back and forth, back and forth. I live in Rochester, New York. . . ."

His eyes grew deeply crafty, and he leaned forward, touching me on the knee with the fingers of a paradoxically delicate hand.

"I came back, I say, and I went deeper than any of them. I hate greasers, but I like Mexicans! A puzzle? Listen to me, young fellow—you don't think Mexico is really Spanish, do you? God, if you knew the tribes I know! In the mountains—in the mountains—Anahuac—Tenochtitlan—the old ones. . . ."

His voice changed to a chanting and not unmelodious howl.

"Iä! Huitzilopotchli! . . . Nahuatlacatl! Seven, seven, seven . . . Xochimilca, Chalca, Tepaneca, Acolhua, Tlahuica, Tlascalteca, Azteca! . . . Iä! Iä! I have been to the Seven Caves of Chicomoztoc, but no one shall ever know! I tell you *because you will never repeat it*. . . ."

He subsided, and resumed a conversational tone.

"It would surprise you to know what things are told in the mountains. Huitzilopotchli is coming back . . . of that there can be no doubt. Any peon south of Mexico City can tell you that. But I meant to do nothing about it. I went home, as I tell you, again and again, and was going to benefit society with my electric executioner when that cursed Albany legislature adopted the other way. A joke, sir, a joke! Grandfather's chair—sit by the fireside—Hawthorne—"

The man was chuckling with a morbid parody of good nature.

"Why, sir, I'd like to be the first man to sit in their damned chair and feel their little two-bit battery current! It wouldn't make a frog's legs dance! And they expect to kill murderers with it—reward of merit—everything! But then, young man, I saw the uselessness—the pointless illogicality, as it were—of killing just a few. Everybody is a murderer—they murder ideas—steal inventions—stole mine by watching, and watching, and watching—"

The man choked and paused, and I spoke soothingly.

"I'm sure your invention was much the better, and probably they'll come to use it in the end."

Evidently my tact was not great enough, for his response showed fresh irritation.

“‘Sure,’ are you? Nice, mild, conservative assurance! Cursed lot you care—*but you’ll soon know!* Why, damn you, all the good there ever will be in that electric chair will have been stolen from me. The ghost of Nezahualpilli told me that on the sacred mountain. They watched, and watched, and watched—”

He choked again, then gave another of those gestures in which he seemed to shake both his head and his facial expression. That seemed temporarily to steady him.

“What my invention needs is testing. This is it—here. The wire hood or head-net is flexible, and slips on easily. Neckpiece binds but doesn’t choke. Electrodes touch forehead and base of cerebellum—all that’s necessary. Stop the head, and what else can go? The fools up at Albany, with their carved oak easy-chair, think they’ve got to make it a head-to-foot affair. Idiots!—don’t they know that you don’t need to shoot a man through the body after you’ve plugged him through the brain? I’ve seen men die in battle—I know better. And then their silly high-power circuit—dynamoes—all that. Why didn’t they see what I’ve done with the storage-battery? Not a hearing—nobody knows—I alone have the secret—that’s why I and Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopotchli will rule the world alone—I and they, if I choose to let them. . . . But I must have experimental subjects—subjects—*do you know whom I’ve chosen for the first?*”

I tried jocoseness, quickly merging into friendly seriousness, as a sedative. Quick thought and apt words might save me yet.

“Well, there are lots of fine subjects among the politicians of San Francisco, where I come from! They need your treatment, and I’d like to help you introduce it! But really, I think I can help you in all truth. I have some influence in Sacramento, and if you’ll go back to the States with me after I’m through with my business in Mexico, I’ll see that you get a hearing.”

He answered soberly and civilly.

“No—I can’t go back. I swore not to when those criminals at Albany turned down my invention and set spies to watch me and steal from

me. But I must have American subjects. Those greasers are under a curse, and would be too easy; and the full-blood Indians—the real children of the feathered serpent—are sacred and inviolate except for proper sacrificial victims . . . and even those must be slain according to ceremony. I must have Americans without going back—and the first man I choose will be signally honored. Do you know who he is?”

I temporized desperately.

“Oh, if that’s all the trouble, I’ll find you a dozen first-rate Yankee specimens as soon as we get to Mexico City! I know where there are lots of small mining men who wouldn’t be missed for days—”

But he cut me short with a new and sudden air of authority which had a touch of real dignity in it.

“That’ll do—we’ve trifled long enough. Get up and stand erect like a man. You’re the subject I’ve chosen, and you’ll thank me for the honor in the other world, just as the sacrificial victim thanks the priest for transferring him to eternal glory. A new principle—no other man alive has dreamed of such a battery, and it might never again be hit on if the world experimented a thousand years. Do you know that atoms aren’t what they seem? Fools! A century after this some dolt would be guessing if I were to let the world live!”

As I arose at his command, he drew additional feet of cord from the valise and stood erect beside me; the wire helmet outstretched toward me in both hands, and a look of real exaltation on his tanned and bearded face. For an instant he seemed like a radiant Hellenic mystagogue or hierophant.

“Here, O Youth—a libation! Wine of the cosmos—nectar of the starry spaces—Linos—Iacchus—Ialemus—Zagreus—Dionysos—Atys—Hylas—sprung from Apollo and slain by the hounds of Argos—seed of Psamathë—child of the sun—Evoë! Evoë!”

He was chanting again, and this time his mind seemed far back amongst the classic memories of his college days. In my erect posture I noticed the nearness of the signal cord overhead, and wondered whether I could reach it through some gesture of ostensible response to his ceremonial mood. It was worth trying, so with an antiphonal cry of

"Evoë!" I put my arms forward and upward toward him in a ritualistic fashion, hoping to give the cord a tug before he could notice the act. But it was useless. He saw my purpose, and moved one hand toward the right-hand coat pocket where my revolver lay. No words were needed, and we stood for a moment like carven figures. Then he quietly said, "Make haste!"

Again my mind rushed frantically about seeking avenues of escape. The doors, I knew, were not locked on Mexican trains; but my companion could easily forestall me if I tried to unlatch one and jump out. Besides, our speed was so great that success in that direction would probably be as fatal as failure. The only thing to do was to play for time. Of the three-and-a-half hour trip a good slice was already worn away, and once we got to Mexico City the guards and police in the station would provide instant safety.

There would, I thought, be two distinct times for diplomatic stalling. If I could get him to postpone the slipping on of the hood, that much time would be gained. Of course I had no belief that the thing was really deadly; but I knew enough of madmen to understand what would happen when it failed to work. To his disappointment would be added a mad sense of my responsibility for the failure, and the result would be a red chaos of murderous rage. Therefore the experiment must be postponed as long as possible. Yet the second opportunity did exist, for if I planned cleverly I might devise explanations for the failure which would hold his attention and lead him into more or less extended searches for corrective influences. I wondered just how far his credulity went, and whether I could prepare in advance a prophecy of failure which would make the failure itself stamp me as a seer or initiate, or perhaps a god. I had enough of a smattering of Mexican mythology to make it worth trying; though I would try other delaying influences first and let the prophecy come as a sudden revelation. Would he spare me in the end if I could make him think me a prophet or divinity? Could I "get by" as Quetzalcoatl or Huitzilopotchli? Anything to drag matters out till five o'clock, when we were due in Mexico City.

But my opening "stall" was the veteran will-making ruse. As the

maniac repeated his command for haste, I told him of my family and intended marriage, and asked for the privilege of leaving a message and disposing of my money and effects. If, I said, he would lend me some paper and agree to mail what I should write, I could die more peacefully and willingly. After some cogitation he gave a favorable verdict and fished in his valise for a pad, which he handed me solemnly as I resumed my seat. I produced a pencil, artfully breaking the point at the outset and causing some delay while he searched for one of his own. When he gave me this, he took my broken pencil and proceeded to sharpen it with a large, horn-handled knife which had been in his belt under his coat. Evidently a second pencil-breaking would not profit me greatly.

What I wrote, I can hardly recall at this date. It was largely gibberish, and composed of random scraps of memorized literature when I could think of nothing else to set down. I made my handwriting as illegible as I could without destroying its nature as writing; for I knew he would be likely to look at the result before commencing his experiment, and realized how he would react to the sight of obvious nonsense. The ordeal was a terrible one, and I chafed each second at the slowness of the train. In the past I had often whistled a brisk gallop to the sprightly "tac" of wheels on rails, but now the tempo seemed slowed down to that of a funeral march—my funeral march, I grimly reflected.

My ruse worked till I had covered over four pages, six by nine; when at last the madman drew out his watch and told me I could have but five minutes more. What should I do next? I was hastily going through the form of concluding the will when a new idea struck me. Ending with a flourish and handing him the finished sheets, which he thrust carelessly into his left-hand coat pocket, I reminded him of my influential Sacramento friends who would be so much interested in his invention.

"Oughtn't I to give you a letter of introduction to them?" I said. "Oughtn't I to make a signed sketch and description of your executioner so that they'll grant you a cordial hearing? They can make you famous, you know—and there's no question at all but that they'll adopt your

method for the state of California if they hear of it through someone like me, whom they know and trust."

I was taking this tack on the chance that his thoughts as a disappointed inventor would let him forget the Aztec-religious side of his mania for a while. When he veered to the latter again, I reflected, I would spring the "revelation" and "prophecy." The scheme worked, for his eyes glowed an eager assent, though he brusquely told me to be quick. He further emptied the valise, lifting out a queer-looking congeries of glass cells and coils to which the wire from the helmet was attached, and delivering a fire of running comment too technical for me to follow yet apparently quite plausible and straightforward. I pretended to note down all he said, wondering as I did so whether the queer apparatus was really a battery after all. Would I get a slight shock when he applied the device? The man surely talked as if he were a genuine electrician. Description of his own invention was clearly a congenial task for him, and I saw he was not as impatient as before. The hopeful gray of dawn glimmered red through the windows before he wound up, and I felt at last that my chance of escape had really become tangible.

But he, too, saw the dawn, and began glaring wildly again. He knew the train was due in Mexico City at five, and would certainly force quick action unless I could override all his judgment with engrossing ideas. As he rose with a determined air, setting the battery on the seat beside the open valise, I reminded him that I had not made the needed sketch; and asked him to hold the headpiece so that I could draw it near the battery. He complied and resumed his seat, with many admonitions to me to hurry. After another moment I paused for some information, asking him how the victim was placed for execution, and how his presumable struggles were overcome.

"Why," he replied, "the criminal is securely strapped to a post. It does not matter how much he tosses his head, for the helmet fits tightly and draws even closer when the current comes on. We turn the switch gradually—you see it here, a carefully arranged affair with a rheostat."

A new idea for delay occurred to me as the tilled fields and increasingly

frequent houses in the dawnlight outside told of our approach to the capital at last.

"But," I said, "I must draw the helmet in place on a human head as well as beside the battery. Can't you slip it on yourself a moment so that I can sketch you with it? The papers as well as the officials will want all this, and they are strong on completeness."

I had, by chance, made a better shot than I had planned; for at my mention of the press the madman's eye lit up afresh.

"The papers? Yes—damn them, you can make even the papers give me a hearing! They all laughed at me and wouldn't print a word. Here, you hurry up! We've not a second to lose!"

He had slipped the headpiece on and was watching my flying pencil avidly. The wire mask gave him a grotesque, comic look as he sat there with nervously twitching hands.

"Now, curse 'em, they'll print pictures! I'll revise your sketch if you make any blunders—must be accurate at any cost. Police will find you afterward—they'll tell how it works. Associated Press item—back up your letter—immortal fame. . . . Hurry, I say—hurry, confound you!"

The train was lurching over the poorer roadbed near the city, and we swayed disconcertingly now and then. With this excuse I managed to break the pencil again, but of course the maniac at once handed me my own which he had sharpened. My first batch of ruses was about used up, and I felt that I should have to submit to the headpiece in a moment. We were still a good quarter-hour from the terminal, and it was about time for me to divert my companion to his religious side and spring the divine prophecy.

Mustering up my scraps of Nahuatl-Aztec mythology, I suddenly threw down pencil and paper and commenced to chant.

"Iä! Iä! Tloquenahuaque, Thou Who Art All In Thyself! Thou, too, Ipalnemoan, By Whom We Live! I hear, I hear! I see, I see! Serpent-bearing Eagle, hail! A message! A message! Huitzilopochtli, in my soul echoes thy thunder!"

At my intonations the maniac stared incredulously through his odd mask, his handsome face shown in a surprise and perplexity which

quickly changed to alarm. His mind seemed to go blank a moment, and then to recrystallize in another pattern. Raising his hands aloft, he chanted as if in a dream.

"Mictlanteuctli, Great Lord, a sign! A sign from within thy black cave! Iä! Tonatiuh-Metztl! Cthulhutl! Command, and I serve!"

Now in all this responsive gibberish there was one word which struck an odd cord in my memory. Odd, because it never occurs in any printed account of Mexican mythology, yet had been overheard by me more than once as an awe-struck whisper amongst the peons in my own firm's Tlaxcala mines. It seemed to be part of an exceedingly secret and ancient ritual; for there were characteristic whispered responses which I had caught now and then, and which were as unknown as itself to academic scholarship. This maniac must have spent considerable time with the hill peons and Indians, just as he had said; for surely such unrecorded lore could have come from no mere book-learning. Realizing the importance he must attach to this doubly esoteric jargon, I determined to strike at his most vulnerable spot and give him the gibberish responses the natives used.

"Ya-R'lyeh! Ya-R'lyeh!" I shouted. "Cthulhutl fhtaghn! Niguratl-Yig! Yog-Sototl—"

But I never had a chance to finish. Galvanized into a religious epilepsy by the exact response which his subconscious mind had probably not really expected, the madman scrambled down to a kneeling posture on the floor, bowing his wire-helmeted head again and again, and turning it to right and left as he did so. With each turn his obeisances became more profound, and I could hear his foaming lips repeating the syllable "kill, kill, kill," in a rapidly swelling monotone. It occurred to me that I had overreached myself, and that my response had unloosed a mounting mania which would rouse him to the slaying-point before the train reached the station.

As the arc of the madman's turnings gradually increased, the slack in the cord from his headpiece to the battery had naturally been taken up more and more. Now, in an all-forgetting delirium of ecstasy, he began to magnify his turns to complete circles, so that the cord wound

round his neck and began to tug at its moorings to the battery on the seat. I wondered what he would do when the inevitable would happen, and the battery would be dragged to presumable destruction on the floor.

Then came the sudden cataclysm. The battery, yanked over the seat's edge by the maniac's last gesture of orgiastic frenzy, did indeed fall; but it did not seem to have wholly broken. Instead, as my eye caught the spectacle in one too-fleeting instant, the actual impact was borne by the rheostat, so that the switch was jerked over instantly to full current. And the marvelous thing is that there *was* a current. The invention was no mere dream of insanity.

I saw a blinding blue auroral coruscation, heard an ululating shriek more hideous than any of the previous cries of that mad, horrible journey, and smelled the nauseous odor of burning flesh. That was all my overwrought consciousness could bear, and I sank instantly into oblivion.

When the train guard at Mexico City revived me, I found a crowd on the station platform around my compartment door. At my involuntary cry the pressing faces became curious and dubious, and I was glad when the guard shut out all but the trim doctor who had pushed his way through to me. My cry was a very natural thing, but it had been prompted by something more than the shocking sight on the carriage floor which I had expected to see. Or I should say, by something *less*, because in truth there was not anything on the floor at all.

Nor, said the guard, had there been when he opened the door and found me unconscious within. My ticket was the only one sold for that compartment, and I was the only person found within it. Just myself and my valise, nothing more. I had been alone all the way from Quere-taro. Guard, doctor, and spectators alike tapped their foreheads significantly at my frantic and insistent questions.

Had it all been a dream, or was I indeed mad? I recalled my anxiety and overwrought nerves, and shuddered. Thanking the guard and doctor, and shaking free of the curious crowd, I staggered into a cab and was taken to the Fonda Nacional, where, after telegraphing Jackson at the mine, I slept till afternoon in an effort to get a fresh grip on myself. I had

myself called at one o'clock, in time to catch the narrow-gage for the mining country, but when I got up I found a telegram under the door. It was from Jackson, and said that Feldon had been found dead in the mountains that morning, the news reaching the mine about ten o'clock. The papers were all safe, and the San Francisco office had been duly notified. So the whole trip, with its nervous haste and harrowing mental ordeal, had been for nothing!

Knowing that McComb would expect a personal report despite the course of events, I sent another wire ahead and took the narrow-gage after all. Four hours later I was rattled and jolted into the station of Mine No. 3, where Jackson was waiting to give a cordial greeting. He was so full of the affair at the mine that he did not notice my still shaken and seedy appearance.

The superintendent's story was brief, and he told it as he led me toward the shack up the hillside above the *arrastra*, where Feldon's body lay. Feldon, he said, had always been a queer, sullen character, ever since he was hired the year before; working at some secret mechanical device and complaining of constant espionage, and being disgustingly familiar with the native workmen. But he certainly knew the work, the country, and the people. He used to make long trips into the hills where the peons lived, and even to take part in some of their ancient, heathenish ceremonies. He hinted at odd secrets and strange powers as often as he boasted of his mechanical skill. Of late he had disintegrated rapidly; growing morbidly suspicious of his colleagues, and undoubtedly joining his native friends in ore-thieving after his cash got low. He needed unholy amounts of money for something or other—was always having boxes come from laboratories and machine shops in Mexico City or the States.

As for the final absconding with all the papers—it was only a crazy gesture of revenge for what he called "spying." He was certainly stark mad, for he had gone across country to a hidden cave on the wild slope of the haunted Sierra de Malinche, where no white men live, and had done some amazingly queer things. The cave, which would never have been found but for the final tragedy, was full of hideous old Aztec idols

and altars; the latter covered with the charred bones of recent burnt-offerings of doubtful nature. The natives would tell nothing—indeed, they swore they knew nothing—but it was easy to see that the cave was an old rendezvous of theirs, and that Feldon had shared their practises to the fullest extent.

The searchers had found the place only because of the chanting and the final cry. It had been close to five that morning, and after an all-night encampment the party had begun to pack up for its empty-handed return to the mines. Then somebody had heard faint rhythms in the distance, and knew that one of the noxious old native rituals was being howled from some lonely spot up the slope of the corpse-shaped mountain. They heard the same old names—Mictlanteuctli, Tonatiuh-Metzli, Cthulhutl, Ya-R'lyeh, and all the rest—but the queer thing was that some English words were mixed with them. Real white man's English, and no greaser patter. Guided by the sound, they had hastened up the weed-entangled mountainside toward it, when after a spell of quiet the shriek had burst upon them. It was a terrible thing—a worse thing than any of them had ever heard before. There seemed to be some smoke, too, and a morbid acrid smell.

Then they stumbled on the cave, its entrance screened by scrub mesquites, but now emitting clouds of fetid smoke. It was lighted within, the horrible altars and grotesque images revealed flickeringly by candles which must have been changed less than a half-hour before; and on the gravelly floor lay the horror that made all the crowd reel backward. It was Feldon, head burned to a crisp by some odd device he had slipped over it—a kind of wire cage connected with a rather shaken-up battery which had evidently fallen to the floor from a nearby altar-pot. When the men saw it they exchanged glances, thinking of the "electric executioner" Feldon had always boasted of inventing—the thing which everyone had rejected, but had tried to steal and copy. The papers were safe in Feldon's open portmanteau which stood close by, and an hour later the column of searchers started back for No. 3 with a grisly burden on an improvised stretcher.

That was all, but it was enough to make me turn pale and falter as

Jackson led me up past the *arrastra* to the shed where he said the body lay. For I was not without imagination, and knew only too well into what hellish nightmare this tragedy somehow supernaturally dovetailed. I knew what I should see inside that gaping door around which the curious miners clustered, and did not flinch when my eyes took in the giant form, the rough corduroy clothes, the oddly delicate hands, the wisps of burnt beard, and the hellish machine itself—battery slightly broken, and headpiece blackened by the charring of what was inside. The great, bulging portmanteau did not surprise me, and I quailed only at two things—the folded sheets of paper sticking out of the left-hand coat pocket, and the queer sagging of the corresponding right-hand pocket. In a moment when no one was looking I reached out and seized the too familiar sheets, crushing them in my hand without daring to look at their penmanship. I ought to be sorry now that a kind of panic fear made me burn them that night with averted eyes. They would have been a positive proof or disproof of something—but for that matter I could still have had proof by asking about the revolver the coroner afterward took from that sagging right-hand coat pocket. I never had the courage to ask about that—because my own revolver was missing after the night on the train. My pocket pencil, too, showed signs of a crude and hasty sharpening unlike the precise pointing I had given it Friday afternoon on the machine in President McComb's private car.

So in the end I went home still puzzled—mercifully puzzled, perhaps. The private car was repaired when I got back to Queretaro, but my greatest relief was crossing the Rio Grande into El Paso and the States. By the next Friday I was in San Francisco again, and the postponed wedding came off the following week.

As to what really happened that night—as I've said, I simply don't dare to speculate. That chap Feldon was insane to start with, and on top of his insanity he had piled a lot of prehistoric Aztec witchlore that nobody has any right to know. He was really an inventive genius, and that battery must have been the genuine stuff. I heard later how he had been brushed aside in former years by press, public, and potentates alike. Too much disappointment isn't good for men of a certain kind. Anyhow,

some unholy combination of influences was at work. He had really, by the way, been a soldier of Maximilian's.

When I tell my story most people call me a plain liar. Others lay it to abnormal psychology—and Heaven knows I *was* overwrought—while still others talk of "astral projection" of some sort. My zeal to catch Feldon certainly sent my thoughts ahead toward him, and with all his Indian magic he'd be about the first one to recognize and meet them. Was he in the railway carriage or was I in the cave on the corpse-shaped haunted mountain? What would have happened to me, had I not delayed him as I did? I'll confess I don't know, and I'm not sure that I want to know. I've never been in Mexico since—and as I said at the start, I don't enjoy hearing about electric executions.

Satan's Servants

By ROBERT BLOCH

(Together with notes and commentary by H. P. Lovecraft)

SOME WHILE AGO a statement appeared to the effect that there were "no more unpublished Lovecraft stories or collaborations." While lamenting this pronouncement, I recalled that early in 1935 I had written and submitted a story entitled *Satan's Servants*, which was rejected by Farnsworth Wright, then editor of *Weird Tales* on the grounds that the plot-structure was too flimsy for the extended length of the narrative.

At that time I was in constant correspondence with H. P. Lovecraft, and we frequently exchanged current manuscripts for suggestions and critical comment. Accordingly, I sent him my rejected story; and because the tale had a New England *locale* I made bold to ask if he would be interested in collaborating with me on a revision.

As the excerpts from his letter below will indicate, he refused a full-dress collaborative effort, but my manuscript came back copiously annotated and corrected, together with a lengthy and exhaustive list of suggestions for revision.

I placed the story in my files, fully intending to get at a new version when the time was right. Through the years the pages literally mouldered; I exhumed them from time to time when re-sorting material, moving, weeding out deadwood, and reviewing unpublished stories and outlines. Some years ago I utilized the name of the principal character, "Gideon Godfrey" when writing a tale in a modern setting. But *Satan's Servants* gathered dust for fourteen long years until I fell to musing upon the sorry fact that there would be no more Lovecraft stories or stories inspired, revised, or partially-written.

Acting on impulse, I invaded the elephants' graveyard at the bottom of my bureau and there, amidst a welter of outlines, novel fragments,

radio scripts and assorted incunabula, I managed to disinter the yellowed pages of the original manuscript, with the marginalia in HPL's familiar crabbed hand. I also unearthed Lovecraft's lengthy letter in which he discussed the project of revision.

I determined to revise the tale forthwith, and spoke of my determination to August Derleth, Lovecraft's biographer, who suggested that I revise the story especially for the *Arkham Sampler*, and include a portion of the correspondence, plus some of the more pertinent critical commentary in the form of footnotes to the text of the tale. Excerpts from HPL's letter accordingly follow, and the notes will be found at the conclusion of the story.

There is much to interest the student of Lovecraft's work here; his comments mirror perfectly his own precise and erudite approach to his material. From the purely personal standpoint, I was often fascinated during the process of revision by the way in which certain interpolated sentences or phrases of Lovecraft's seemed to dovetail with my own work—for in 1935 I was quite consciously a disciple of what has since come to be known as the "Lovecraft school" of weird fiction. I doubt greatly if even the self-professed "Lovecraft scholar" can pick out his actual verbal contributions to the finished tale; most of the passages which would be identified as "pure Lovecraft" are my work; all of the sentences and bridges he added are of an incidental nature and merely supplement the text. Certain major suggestions for plot-revision have been incorporated, but these in turn have been re-edited by a third party—myself, 1949 edition. For the Robert Bloch of 1935, as I painfully discovered during this revision process, is as dead as Howard Phillips Lovecraft is today. Peace to their mutual ashes!

There remains only to add that there is a possibility of one more exhumation from the past. In 1935 I wrote and published *The Shambler from the Stars*, dedicated to HPL. A year or so later, HPL wrote a sequel, *The Haunter of the Dark*, dedicated to me. In my story I used him as a character and in his story he used me. Subsequently I suggested writing a third story to complete the trilogy, taking up where he left off.

This tale, *The Shadow in the Steeple*, elicited considerable enthusiasm from Lovecraft when I outlined it to him in a letter. He urged me to write it, but I deferred. It may be that at some future date, I shall complete the project.

If not, then this is definitely to my knowledge the last story in which Lovecraft conceivably had a hand. Portions of his letter follow; then the tale itself. I now surrender my pen to Howard Phillip Lovecraft, who writes:

"And now let me congratulate you most sincerely on the excellence of *Satan's Servants*—which I read with keen pleasure and unflagging interest . . . regarding the future treatment of the story—it certainly deserves touching up and further submission for publication.

"I have taken the liberty to add some marginal notes and make some changes which seemed necessary from an historical and geographical standpoint. Most of these explain themselves.

"Roodsford had to be outside the boundaries of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, since the strict oversight prevailing within that rigid theocratic unit would never have suffered such a place to exist. Also—the location had to be shifted to some point on the coast where the settlement was not thick. Early New England was colonized with a rush so that by 1690 the whole coastal region was dotted with thriving towns and almost continuous farmsteads. Two generations of settled life had almost removed every trace of the wilderness aspect and (after King Philip's War in 1675-6) Indians were rarely seen.

"The only place on the coast where a village could exist relatively unknown would be Maine—whose connexion with Mass. did not begin until 1663, and which was not an actual part of that province until July, 1690. I have decided to locate Roodsford between York and Wells if that is agreeable to you. Enclosed is a map of New England (which you can keep) shewing the new position. That any wilderness journey would have to start from Portsmouth and not Boston or Salem would be obvious from an inspection of this chart.

"The narration itself is splendidly vivid—my only criticism having to

do with Gideon's *excessively quick* discovery of the nature and horrors of Roodsford. It would be much more powerful to have this revelation come with hideous *gradualness* after days of hellish *suspicion*. . . .

"Be very careful when representing archaic language—for the usual tendency is to overshoot the mark and make the diction *too* ancient. Study the spelling in actual specimens of 17th century printing. I've made a few changes in your principal sample on page 1. Regarding Governor Phipps—he was no witch-finder prior to 1692, but a voyager and soldier of fortune whose career makes interesting reading. . . .

"At the end of the story I've brought up the point of whether you ought to have the action take place before or after the 1692-3 Salem affair. Certainly it ought to be *afterward* if you wish to convey the idea that this Roodsford business ended witchcraft in New England. By the way—the leading wizard in the Salem trouble, Rev. George Burroughs, came down from Wells, Maine, near the relocated site of Roodsford. You can make something of that, perhaps, if you wished. . . .

"Now as to the idea of collaboration—this tale really tempts me more than any other I've seen lately, but I honestly don't believe I could undertake any collaboration job at all at this time. . . .

"Under any circumstances collaboration is a harder task than original writing, and the only possible justification is that of wishing some idea to be properly developed which otherwise couldn't be. Now in the case of *Satan's Servants* I feel certain you can develop the tale yourself just as well as I could—hence don't feel guilty in suggesting that you try it. During recent months I have had to place a complete veto—sheer self-defense—on all collaboration projects . . . when so many stories of my own are veritably howling to be written.

"But as I said before, in this case I feel sure I'm not doing the story any harm by staying out of it. It's great stuff, and you can polish it up just as well as anybody else could. The descriptions of the Sabbath are splendid and the climax is magnificent. The primary need is to make the traveller's introduction to the horrors subtler and more gradual. . . .

"Incidentally, I feel rather akin to Gideon since I have an actual line of *Godfrey* ancestry. On October 29, 1732, my ancestor Newman Perkins

(b. 1711) was married to Mehitabel, daughter of John Godfrey of S. Kingstown, R.I. We may well assume John to be Gideon's brother or nephew or cousin!

—H. P. LOVECRAFT."

"Satan's prevalencie of this Age is most clear in the marvellous number of Witches abounding in all places. Now hundreds are discovered in one Shire; and, if Fame deceives us not, in a Village of Fourteen Houses in the North, are found so many of this Damned Brood. . . ."

—COTTON MATHER

I

IT WAS QUITE evident that the inhabitants of Roodsford¹ did not come over in the *Mayflower* or any of her sister ships; that, indeed, they had not sailed from an English port at all. Nor is there a known and reputable record of their coming to that barren region of the north coast. They simply entered the land unnoticed and without charter, permission or proviso, set up their simple dwellings.

They were let alone because their haven lay beyond the Massachusetts Bay's officious reach—in Maine, where the Puritan's autocratic hand did not descend till 1663. The first mention of the place occurs in the *Chronicles of Captain Elias Godworthy, His Trips & Explorations upon the Continent of North America*, printed by Haverstock in London, in 1672.² He describes it as "a fishing Towne of fourteen Houses, the Inhabitants of which wear doleful, ungodly Look in Keeping with Their meagre Dwellings."³

The good Captain had made but a cursory inspection whilst passing up the coast in a sloop bound for Nova Scotian shores, and evidently no one cared to follow up his testimony, for the name of Roodsford does not recur in Colonial history until the atrocious witchcraft days of '92. Then came investigation with a vengeance.

So for a time the people and the ways of Roodsford were to the outer world very largely unknown. Even in Portsmouth they were only an unsavoury legend, while at York all mention of them was avoided by common consent.

How Gideon Godfrey of Boston gleaned his story is as yet undetermined. Perhaps he had heard some of the queer hints and furtive, whispered rumors circulated by the savages or traders⁴ who made occasional trips down the coast with supplies of furs, or perhaps something had come out in the closer surveys of Maine which accompanied its fusion with the Massachusetts Bay in 1690. Whatever the source, Gideon must have known or suspected a great deal—for only the most urgent contingency could have caused this man of God to do what he subsequently did.

In the early autumn of 1693 he moved lock, stock and barrel to a dirty little village of foreigners, in a barren wilderness seventy miles up the coast as the crow flies and fully ten miles more by the winding, ferry-broken land route. He left behind him a wife, two children, and a goodly Boston pulpit to ride, uninvited and unannounced, to Roodsford.

Gideon was a pillar of the Church. His fiery sermons, fanatical devotion to the cause of the Puritans, and stoical stamina under the rigours and hardships of a new land were belied, however, in his ascetic countenance and asthenic physique, which gave him the outward appearance of a gangling parson. Only in his fiery, unflinching eyes was there a hint of the ardour which made him the veritable embodiment of the Orthodox Church of the Massachusetts Bay⁵ as he rode into the wilderness to do battle with the heathen.

His going caused much comment. Although he had gained the approval of his superiors, most folk deemed it a rash venture. Gideon, the wise ones declared, was a fool. And in the minds of the elders there was more of apprehension than approbation.

Nevertheless, Gideon Godfrey left Boston on horseback one morning in late September, 1693, amidst the lamentations of friends and family. Before departure he had outlined his route of travel to the Pasquantog sachems who knew something of the region through which he would journey. His plan was to ride to Newbury and spend the night, then go on to Portsmouth the following day before turning west. After that, save for a brief pause at the little village of York, Gideon would be riding

straight through the unblazed forest byways feared by settlers and savages alike.

When Gideon thus charted his journey, the Indians shook their heads. Strange horror, they whispered, crept through those ancient woods and leered down from the brooding hills. They warned him of the perils of riding alone, or venturing into certain secluded forest byways after the coming of night. They counseled him to keep to the coast and stay within a circle of fire if forced to stop between towns betwixt dusk and dawn.

Gideon was most eager to secure more details concerning his destination, but when he asked the Pasquantogs what they knew of Roodsford they shook their heads and pretended not to understand his questionings. Wakimis, the elder sachem, begged him to abandon his journey, and finally proffered the services of two guides who would travel on foot.

Thus they started out, and for the first two days their schedule was maintained with fair ease—Newbury was reached, then Portsmouth, then York.

The next day they plunged at dawn into an unknown world. There was a blue mist over the western hills and a grey fog on the sea. The chill of autumn lay light upon the air, and russet leaves would soon carpet the ground.⁶ After Kittery and York were left behind they turned inland, though the guides again echoed the warnings of Wakimis when they contemplated the blackly wooded route before them. The sea was soon lost to view, and the booming voice of its waters was stilled in their ears.

They journeyed now in forest twilight. Blue shadows hung athwart the twisted pathway, or lurked beside the boles of immemorially ancient trees. Strange rustlings echoed from far-off tangled byways, bringing to Gideon's mind the sachem's tales of fabled presences in the forest. Once there came the remote evil laughter of a trickling brook, whereat the guides drew back, and Gideon's horse whinnied piteously; but Godfrey himself gave no sign of having heard.

Their way led them through a wood forever denser, yet with deceptive

suggestions of branching paths which gave rise to temporary loss of bearings. Again and again time was lost, till at length Gideon's carefully arranged daylight travelling schedule seemed likely to prove of no avail.⁷

Fording a swiftly-charging stream shortly after midday, they came upon a still more forbidding expanse of forest where the path was merely a vague outline in shrouding gloom. Here all was silent amidst the darkness, and the small familiar voices of bird and animal were unnaturally mute. Indeed, bird and animal life seemed singularly absent, nor were there the usual insects. Even the vegetation was oddly altered; they saw neither leaves, grass, nor ordinary shrubbery—only the great black shadows of old and withered trees.

One of the savages whispered that the woods were known in Pasquantog lore; he spoke of fissures and seams in the earth near certain of the denser swamps, and of queer voices that answered when the medicine-men called. Tribal legend hinted at these beings, half-animal and half-human, who held conclaves in the grottoes and gibbered rituals deep in the earth. The White Ice—by which he meant the glaciers—had done away with many of these things, but surviving presences existed still, hidden and waiting in the forest fastness.⁸ That was why the animals and birds had fled to safer preserves in the north, where the tribe usually hunted.

"Turn back now," the guide counselled. "Soon comes night, and we shall be lost. We are brave men, and you carry mighty medicine in your Black Book, I know. But what good is the White God's magic against the demons that thunder in the earth?"

The other guide eagerly assented and urged that they at least cut across to the coast if they could not reach Kittery or York before darkness.

Gideon listened, tightlipped and silent, and his hand searched out the great Bible in his left saddle-pack.

He clutched the book to his bosom and sat erect in the saddle.

"Hear me out," he said. "It is in my mind that much truth lies in your heathen wisdom, for we dwell in an unknown and unhallowed land. Have not Increase and Cotton Mather, as well as other godly and

eminent divines, affirmed that this America is the Devil's paradise? Have not we discovered witchcraft in the very centers of civilization, hanging⁹ the wizards in Boston and Salem? And are not these self-same witches and warlocks the minions of Satan who so lately bestirred the entire continent of Europe?

"I have had some slight experience in these matters. I was present at the trial of the notorious Mary Wright and talked to a pious and famous witch-finder, Jeremy Edmunds; he who has told us in his sermons of the geography of Hell—finding it to be exactly four thousand, three hundred and twenty-seven miles in circumference. It was he who urged me to dedicate myself to this journey."

As he spoke, Gideon was conscious of his inability to translate and transmit Edmunds' message to these simple savages. The great man had indeed spoken at length of the witchcraft menace; of the foul plague of sorcery which was even now ravaging Europe as well as the colonies. He told Gideon of the damage these creatures had wrought—of storms conjured up at sea, of children deranged, of cattle ravaged by disease. He spoke of the witches and their familiars; bats, mice, ousels, cats and animals unknown to any Bestiary, creatures of evil in animal form bestowed upon witches as counselors and protectors by the Devil. Edmunds mentioned the various tests then in fashion whereby witches might be detected—trial by water, the search for witch-marks, and other scientific means of determining guilt.

"Since I learned of the extent of Satan's hold over this land, I have sought unceasingly to discover the source of this peril to our people," Godfrey continued. The Indians listened stolidly enough, but their shifting feet and the sidelong covert glances they bestowed upon the forest's surrounding shadows gave token of their unease.

Gideon tried to explain his mission—how he had preached his sermon against the Adversary and corresponded extensively with witch-finders in England, meanwhile meeting with brother parsons in Salem, Plymouth, Newport and the inland towns. All references in the Bible had been most assiduously studied, and from obscure sources he had secured dog-eared and decaying copies of strange and terrible books. He had read

the blasphemous accounts in the cryptic *Necronomicon* and the queer verse-sequence of Heber's *Daemonic Presences* with its sly hints and subtle allusions to the *Fable of the Tree and the Fruit*. In a manner befitting the true scholar, he endeavored to lay hands on all that had been written concerning the subject at hand, and he listened, as well.

Gradually, Gideon's interest had shifted to the direct study of those about him. He traced down rumors, sought the sources of stories told by isolated farmers in the far-off hills. There were the Indian myths to ponder upon as well; incredible legends of creatures who had lurked in the lands to the west and fled at the coming of the whites. The Pasquans held ancient beliefs concerning presences who had come to the earth from the sky or crawled out of caverns upon suitable evocation.

Many of these legends were far too fantastic for credence, but others ominously paralleled normal Christian dogma.

Horned entities—creatures with wings and hoofs—cloven footprints found in swamps—giant stags speaking in the voices of men—black beings dancing in forest glens to the sound of drums deep within the earth—these things the savages feared even as Christians did. Such stories fired Gideon with fresh zeal, and more momentous still were the actual reports of specific instances which he gleaned from visitors and hunters who dealt with isolated and half-forgotten settlements.

Here in New England whole villages had mysteriously disappeared, not through famine or Indian attack, but by the simple process of evaporation. One day they existed and the next day nothing remained but a cluster of empty houses. Other communities held dark communion under midnight moons, and children of neighboring villages were known to have vanished mysteriously just before such occasions. Sometimes a minister reached a neighboring town with an account of his rejection by parishioners in favor of new and secret ways of worship. There was talk of ceremonies in which both white men and savages adored a common altar; of isolated towns grown suddenly and amazingly prosperous in barren wilds.

More dreadful still were the mumbled accounts of strange happenings

in isolated graveyards; of open graves, of coffins seemingly burst from within, of graves that were not deep enough for their purpose and of graves there were far too deep, leading to tunnels beneath the earth.

These tales and others of like nature, together with the written testimony he gathered, increased steadily during the year or more of Gideon's investigation. But appeals to authority for the commissioning of a crusade into the hinterlands met with no success. The courts were overburdened with local witchcraft trials. Storm as he would that the evil must be stamped out at its source, Gideon's sermons and appeals fell upon deaf ears. Slowly he realized that he could look for no outside aid in his battle with the Adversary.

"I have but one ally," he concluded, to the Pasquantog guides. "The Almighty attends me in this mission.

"For whilst the courts labour against a few aged men and women who practise sorcery in Salem or Boston Town, the gravest source of Evil still festers here in the wilds, crouches in the forest and broods on these silent and secret hills. Gallows Hill¹⁰ can not accommodate all the minions of Satan. This I have long since concluded.

"It has been in my mind that even as the godly have their houses of worship in which to gather and to spread the Gospel unto all, so must the spawn of Satan have builded an unsanctified sanctuary of their own. If this could be found, reached, and destroyed, then the forces of Evil could be dissipated and the hand of the Devil lifted from the land.

"Lately there came to me news of the lone village where the black northern forest presses down on a desolate coast—this Roodsford. And it was as though revelation were made; surely, I thought, this must be the very center of sin I seek!

"I have ridden forth to destroy it, and I shall not turn back. For the Lord is with me, and with you, and there is nothing to fear. No, my friends, we shall go on and do what must be done. Let us not speak again of returning until our task is accomplished."

So saying, Gideon lifted his Bible in a blessing, and with his left hand he cocked a pistol which he pointed at the guides for added emphasis.

Thus assured of his earnest conviction, the guides offered no further protest when Gideon bid them move forward down the trail into the gathering night.

Gideon, despite his outward show of assurance, felt his stomach quake with trepidation, for he knew full well the dangers amongst which he placed himself. He feared the aspect of this night-wood almost as mightily as did his guides, and he was not reassured to sense the body of his horse trembling as if taken with a sudden fever. But he still had his Bible and his prayers, plus the small comfort of a new lantern which he now lit and tendered to one of the Pasquantogs who led the way.

Unexpectedly, they came upon an open glade in the midst of the forest. Here, beneath a turbulent sky, dimly illumined by a cloud-choked moon, Gideon Godfrey and his two companions prepared to spend the night. Reaching Roodsford this evening was obviously out of the question, and the savages seemed oddly relieved when Gideon called a halt and tethered his horse.

Silently the Pasquantogs gathered dry wood for a fire and kindled it, Indian fashion, at the base of a cairn in the center of the clearing. There followed a brief repast of salt pork and corn bread¹¹ taken from one of Gideon's capacious saddlebags. The horse was fed and watered—for one of the guides discovered a brook that crawled in sluggish murk along one side of the clearing—then tethered again to a sapling at the edge of the glade.

There was little conversation, for the spoken word seemed to slink into the vast, silent pool of the surrounding night. The Pasquantogs lay down upon their blankets and gave themselves up to uneasy prayers to the guiding Manitou. Gideon paid them no heed, but sat alone by the lantern-light, his pistol across his lap and his Bible in hand, reading aloud softly and steadfastly from the tale of Jehu the witch-hunter.

After a time he closed the book and placed it beneath his head for a pillow. Then he extinguished the lantern and the night came down. He lay there for long moments in the darkness, fighting the panic which came with the baleful blanketing of blackness. Steadfastly, Gideon prayed himself to sleep. So the long night passed, and slowly the flame of dawn kindled the heads of the giant trees.

As Gideon awoke from dream-bedazzled sleep, he stared about the clearing with new comprehension. In last night's gloom he had not taken cognizance of the unnatural and *artificial* aspects of the glade. Now for the first time he noticed how smooth was the turf surrounding the great triad of white stones at its center. He regarded the peculiar geometrical conformation of the rocks themselves; the carefully chipped and pointed angles which bore such a calculated relation to the positions of certain of the major stars upon summer nights. There were a few grotesque carvings at the base of the stones which were obviously the product of human handicraft; crude designs which resembled the signs and symbols Gideon had seen in some of the mouldering books of elder lore.

Could he have unwittingly chosen to pass the night in one of the meeting-places the Indians had spoken of with such dread? If so, perhaps it was only his prayers which had protected him.

Thus Gideon mused, his eyes roving the glade. Then he sat bolt upright with a sudden start, as he realized that he was now the sole occupant of the clearing.

His horse and the two guides were gone.

II

Alone in the wilderness, Gideon Godfrey took counsel with himself. He had but two possible alternatives; the first being to retrace his footsteps and endeavor to overtake the Pasquantogs and his horse and either reclaim his property by force or join them on the trip back to civilization. The second alternative, obviously, was to continue on to Roodsford alone.

To a man of sense, the first course was undoubtedly advisable. But Gideon was not a man of sense—he was a man of God. As such, he determined, he would complete his mission. Without food, water, steed or guide he meant to travel today through the forest and reach Roodsford before nightfall. He still had his pistol and his Bible but these were as nothing compared to his faith.

He drank and washed at the brook, then rose, gave one last parting glance to the singular altar-stones within the clearing, and turned his eyes resolutely forward to the woods.

As Gideon trod the cryptic byways of the lonely fastness, his thoughts were far away. He was endeavoring now to formulate a new plan of procedure. It had been his original intention to ride into Roodsford on horseback and proceed immediately to go about the business of exorcising the spot with certain efficacious incantations as he had gleaned from the forbidden volumes over which he had pored so diligently. He was confident that he had transcribed spells of fearsome potency which would dispel the evil-doers before they could overcome him either physically or through magical means. Now all this must be abandoned, for the copies of the runes reposed in one of the saddlebags on the back of the missing horse.

Gideon's faith in the righteousness of his cause remained unshaken, even though hunger grew in his belly with the rising sun. His stride lengthened as he passed through a grove of bearded trees that muttered in the morning breeze like sage elders in some secret council. Then he emerged upon the bank of a goodly river which he must wade, then swim across, wetting himself to the skin and all but perishing in the turbulent concourse of waters. The tidal margin was high, but Gideon managed to clamber through, holding Bible and pistol alike aloft, at no small peril to his own safety.

He did not pause to dry his garments, but walked briskly along the opposite bank, for an empty stomach makes for haste. He covered several miles—many, however, on side-trails on which he had to backtrack his way¹²—before the shortened rays of the sun betokened the approach of late afternoon. It was then that he came upon the jutting peak of a lone hill, rising out of the encircling forest like a newly-emerging island from the green waves of the sea. This was the place where he turned in a northeasterly direction to the coast, and he quickened his pace so that he might come to his destination well before nightfall. But there were other mistakes made without the service of a guide, and he wandered again and again from the path, so that night descended all too soon.

Strange shadows haunted the New England dusk. The drowsy hum of autumn was in the air, and the landscape shimmered in a wan mist, borne on a moaning night wind from the waters to the east.

It was dark when Gideon saw a deep inlet of the sea. A gibbous moon hung over the fog-wreathed waters, and by the pallid light above the high bluff, Gideon Godfrey first beheld the village of Roodsford.

At first glance there was nothing extraordinary about the sight of the little community set against the background of ancient forest. Fourteen tiny two-story frame houses¹³ stood huddled about the needle-like spire of a crude church in prosaic and orthodox fashion. Gideon peered at them and wondered what there was about their aspect and setting which was awry. Perhaps it was the crazy slant of their gables to the sea; mayhap he sensed the strangeness in the absence of friendly lights in the gaping windows and upon the jutting wharf below the bluff. But all this was commonplace enough. Gideon stared and pondered at the spectacle.

Then it came to him that no road wound cheerily away amongst the hills; no figures moved along the single street. The town was silent, desolate and lone.

Gideon stood for long moments contemplating the scene, and for longer moments contemplating his own plight. Enter Roodsford he must, but neither Bible nor pistol would serve to rout any evil he might encounter there. No; this was a situation which called for cunning and stratagem; one must fight fire with fire and Gideon knew he was face to face with the Adversary, the Father of Lies.

Gideon Godfrey, servant of the Lord, would not be welcome in Roodsford, if rumor and repute held truth. But a stranger, lost in the forest, might find shelter. He might be given an opportunity to spend some time in the village; to observe and overhear, to plan a strategy.

Yes, that was now the only way. Gideon walked a few paces until he found a large stone beside the path. Here he knelt and scrabbled at the hard earth, hollowing out a place of concealment for his Bible. He rose, gripping his pistol, then made a wry face as he considered its uselessness. He might fire it once, but he lacked powder and ball for any further use. With a sigh, he placed the pistol alongside the Bible and then covered the hiding-place with loose earth, replacing the rock. He noted the spot well, before striding down towards the village in the gloom of night.

No dogs howled at his coming, but the wind whispered strangely as he approached the end of the little crooked street between the huddled dwelling-places. The first house loomed ahead in shrouded darkness to his left, far back from the dusty, unpaved street. Gideon paused and considered whether or not to continue his progress, then shrugged. For his purpose, one house was as good as another; as a lone wanderer, lost in the forest, he would be most apt to seek shelter at the first door along his path.

Gideon walked up to the black, iron-knocked door set between two shuttered windows. He plied the knocker against the timbers until a booming resonation filled the brooding stillness of the street.¹⁴ For a long moment he stood there, sensing naught but the diminution of the echoes, and then, with a screech and a shudder, the door swung open.

"Welcome," said a voice from the inner gloom. "Welcome to Roodsford."

Gideon stepped over the threshold and into another world.

III

For a moment Gideon stood engulfed in darkness and silence, then started violently as the darkness was broken by lantern-light and the silence shattered by the screech of the closing door.

Eyes and ears affrighted by sudden sensation, Gideon steeled himself against any revelation. Yet nothing he might have imagined was comparable to the shock of actuality—for he now beheld himself standing in a room that was utterly normal in its aspect.

It was the low-raftered parlor of a typical New England farmhouse, complete with stone fireplaces, hand-hewn furniture, rough flooring covered by the skins of animals. Gideon's gaze encountered naught but the familiar fixtures of family existence in the wilderness; he even noted a spinning-wheel near the window alcove to his right.

Nor was he able to detect anything unusual in the aspect of his host, who turned now, lantern in hand, to confront him with a welcoming smile. The man before him was stooped and bent, with lined face and

grizzled beard. He squinted up at Gideon with a cheerful grin and extended a gnarled hand in greeting.

"I fear you roused me from slumber," he said. "I am alone here and it is my custom to retire early, for it is not often that visitors honor me with their presence." He glanced self-consciously at his homespun shirt and breeches. "I must make shift with what garment I possess," he continued, "for there is no one to tend to my needs. You will excuse my appearance."

Gideon nodded, then cleared his throat. "It is I who must apologize. I have gone astray in my journeyings, I fear."

"We see few travelers here," the old man observed, eyeing Gideon closely. "You must have strayed far indeed."

Gideon met his stare and smiled. "I would gladly tell you of my journey. At the moment I am somewhat tired and more than a little hungry—"

The hint did not pass unnoticed.

"Of course. You are welcome to sup and spend the night here."

Thus prosaically began Gideon's stay in Roodsford; as the house guest of old Dorcas Frye. Dorcas was a widower who had come here in '74; he lived alone, hunted and fished, kept his own household. This Gideon learned during the serving of a simple repast—this, and nothing more, although he attempted to draw out his host with remitting patience. But Dorcas Frye proved taciturn and evasive by turns.

Ordinarily, Gideon would have accepted such reticence as normal and natural—for it was not the way of the Puritan to be overly friendly with casual strangers. But suspecting what he did, Gideon read a baleful meaning into his host's unwillingness to talk about himself.

Yet there was nothing to justify any suggestion of hidden secrets or closely-guarded mysteries. The house looked typical, Dorcas seemed a harmless enough elderly settler, and there wasn't even a hint of abnormality, until—

There came a scratching and a scrabbling. Gideon's spoon clashed against the pewter bowl as he started erect, but his trepidation was as

naught compared to that of his host. At the sound, old Dorcas seemed transfixed with terror. And yet, even in the brief moment of awareness, Gideon sensed that the terror was not directed towards the scratching noise, or what might produce it—the old man was afraid because Gideon *heard* the sound.

A scratching and a scrabbling. Gideon turned towards the door, noting that his host made no move to open it. At the same time he realized the reason; the very nature of the sound itself told him that it did not come from the direction of the door. Whatever person, or animal, or demon of the night might be rasping nail or claw to produce the noise, the resultant product was not caused by a scraping against wood. This was the sound of scraping against metal, or against stone—and it did not come from the direction of the door.

Gideon Godfrey's gaze encompassed the room. Was there a panel, a compartment? But how could there be, and of stone or metal? Then he noted Dorcas Frye's stare. The old man was peering at the floor under the table.

The scraping sound grew louder, became a tangible presence in the room. It was no longer possible for one to pretend not to hear, and in a moment it became impossible to pretend not to see.

For the floor *rose*.

A portion of the hardpacked earthen floor beneath the table was moving upwards. Gideon's glance pierced into the shadows, noted for the first time that there was a solid stone surface, a moving surface; recognized the rectangular outline of a trapdoor.

Dorcas was on his feet, and a moment later Gideon stood up—stood up and retreated to the wall as the trapdoor continued to rise.

Without a glance at his guest, the old man stooped and tugged the edge of the door. Gideon saw a black, well-like opening, from which issued further blackness; a moving, tangible blackness that was alive.

The blackness had a red mouth and yellow fangs, red eyes and grey, pointed claws; it was too large for a cat and too small for a wolf, and most men would have identified it as a hound. But Gideon knew that this

was no ordinary black dog—anyone well-versed in the ways of witchcraft could recognize a familiar.

The beast emerged from the cistern-like opening in the earth and squatted, panting and slavering, blinking in the candlelight. For a moment it seemed unaware of Gideon's presence, and then a low growl issued from the crimson cavern of its throat. Dorcas instantly grasped it by its forepaws and restrained it, but the growling increased in volume and accelerated in tempo.

Gideon continued to press against the wall. He stood there, staring at man and beast squatting before him, stood there listening to the baying of the hound, stood there sensing the *wrongness* of it all. For unless he were completely bemused, something was hideously awry. The cadence of the growling was almost *conversational*, and Dorcas bent his head in a pose that could only be construed as that of a *listener*. The great dog growled, and the old man listened, and then they both sat and stared at Gideon.

He knew, then. There was no longer room for any possibility of doubt. Each witch, each wizard or warlock dedicated to the Devil, is assigned a familiar; an imp or sprite or evil spirit sent by Satan in the guise of an animal to counsel and advise, to assist and abet, to watch and to warn. Nourished by blood from the body of the master, the creature serves and protects always. This was Dorcas Frye's familiar—the hound of Hell.

Gideon Godfrey knew, and they knew that he knew. The moment for pretense was past for all of them. Nothing remained but to act. If Dorcas acted, it would be to release the great beast, release it to tear at Gideon's throat. And in a moment he would act, unless—

Gideon spoke.

"I see I have indeed found sanctuary," he said.

"Sanctuary?" The echoed reply was an incredulous curse in Dorcas Frye's mouth, but he held the hound still.

"Until I saw the trapdoor I was not sure, but now I know." Gideon forced a smile to his lips, but Dorcas averted his gaze in confusion.

"I do not understand," he said. "I am but a simple farmer. As you see, the beast is ill-trained; he is of use to me in hunting but I find I must keep him in restraint at other times. Hence I digged this pit—"

Gideon saw his host's hesitancy displayed in his gnarled hands. Gradually they were loosing their grip about the dog's neck. In an instant, should hesitancy give way to decision, he would let the creature spring. Gideon moved quickly.

"Come," he said. "There is no need to deceive me. I know, else I would not have come at this time. I should like to see what lies beneath the house." Unhesitatingly, he walked towards the table, pushed it back, and knelt by the rim of the pit.

As he had surmised, crude footholds had been fashioned in the slanting earth beneath. Gideon was prepared for the domination of the darkness, but the waft of mephitic feter from below was almost unbearable. Still he smiled as he glanced over his shoulder at Dorcas and the hound.

"Light my way," he urged. "Can it be that you are afraid to accompany me?"

The taunt was sufficient. Dorcas gripped a candle with one hand and held the dog by the scruff of the neck with his other hand. Slowly, he knelt and placed his feet gingerly, dragging the black beast behind him. Gideon prepared to follow.

For a moment he felt an irresistible impulse to take flight. It would be simple now to slam down the stone covering to the pit, place the stout table squarely upon the trapdoor and flee into the night. The night was dark and foreboding, but a deeper darkness lurked here below. It would be simple, it would be easy—but Gideon had a mission.

He breathed deeply, then lowered himself into the pit.

They clambered down; the wrinkled wizard, the hound of Hell, and the man of God, descending into the blackness of the bourne. The candle cast shadows on the earthen walls; shadows that crept and capered their way towards inner depths. Gideon counted fifty footholds, then felt solid shale beneath his feet.

Now they were in a corridor; now they walked silently along until they reached a large chamber carved out of the solid stone. The air was

cleaner, moistly cool, and Gideon surmised they must be close to the inlet of the sea.

Dorcas led the way, tugging the hound behind him, and Gideon followed, followed until they rounded a corner of the cavern and emerged into the great dazzling center of light.

The huge chamber was empty, or seemed so at first glance. Gideon saw a vast circular expanse, an underground grotto of stone, with perhaps a dozen lesser entrances spaced at intervals around the walls—entrances similar to the one in which they stood, and undoubtedly reached from other houses in the street above by the same means; trapdoor and tunnel. He saw the carvings on the walls and recognized them, then turned his gaze to the center of the cavern and saw the altar, which he likewise recognized as similar to the stone in the forest clearing.

There were two figures lying across the top of the altar stone.

Gideon moved forward, peering, eyes dazzled by the light which he now perceived came from tapers set in niches along the grotto walls. He moved forward, Dorcas and the hound at his heels, watching, waiting, hesitating. There was something about the figures on the altar which Gideon wanted to verify.

Half-way across the stone floor of the cavern he halted. A sudden rush of sound assailed his ears, coming from *behind* and *below* the other side of the altar. It was a noise composed of many individual noises; rustlings, cheepings, chitterings, cachinnations in cacophony. And then the sound became a sight; a sight rising over the rim of the altar. Again, the sight was composed of many things.

A black, arched furry back . . . a flaring of leathery wings . . . a lashing, tiny tail . . . a fanged grimace . . . a diadem of yellow eyes . . . an arc of curving claw. . . .

They crawled atop the altar in a wave; the cat, the bat, the ousel, the rat, the grinning grimalkin risen from haunted dreams. They spat and snarled and leered and mocked at Gideon as he recognized them for what they were—brothers of the dog behind him, minions of the pit, the familiars of the witches of Roodsford. They squatted on the altar, clawing at the two all-too-familiar figures that lay silently there. They squatted

and they stared at Gideon, as if daring his further approach. They hissed at him and threatened with eyes and teeth and paws.

Dorcas and the hound were very close behind. Gideon could hear the rasp of the old man's breath, the deep panting of the black beast. Still there was nothing to do but peer at the altar; peer and finally recognize the truth.

The two atop the altar were dead, but Gideon knew them now. He saw the two Indian guides who had deserted him in the forest.

How stalked, how slain, how brought here for sacrifice? How prepared now to shock him into admission of identity?

Gideon could not ponder. His every move was studied as he stood within a circle of yellow eyes.

Then the voice of Dorcas Frye croaked out, echoing through the vaulted arch of the pit.

"You have seen. Have you naught to say?"

Gideon stood silent a moment. This was the crisis. He thought of invocation and of prayer, cast the thought aside. It was not the time. But there never would be a time unless he spoke and spoke aright. Inwardly, he prayed for guidance.

They watched him for a long moment, watched him as he turned to Dorcas Frye and smiled.

"Everything is as I would desire," he said. "You have slain the two Pasquantogs and disposed of the horse as well, I note. That is good. No one could possibly have noted my coming. I shall stay with you now until the Sabbat. You are a wise and faithful servant."

Dorcas Frye's eyes widened as Gideon spoke. The mention of the horse was an inspiration on Gideon's part—and at the utterance of the words "Sabbat" and "servant," the old man's mouth gaped.

"Who—who are you?" he whispered. There was silence in the cavern as he bent forward for a reply; silence as the creatures of the night peered up at Gideon and awaited an answer.

Gideon smiled and shrugged. His hands signed the cross in reverse.

"Do you not recognize me?" he asked. "I am the Messenger of the

Master, sent to prepare the way for his coming. I am Asmodeus—Prince of Hell!”

IV

Later—much later—Gideon slept, in the chambers above, upon a couch of deerskin. But not before he explained that his coming was but a test of Dorcas Fry's fidelity to Satan; not before he had perjured his way into complete acceptance; not before the fawning hound had licked his fingers.

The seventy-odd inhabitants of Roodsford had been summoned to the dark chamber to greet him, and toasts were drunk in a strange wine. Gideon chose to be silent in his new role, and to play the listener. His choice was accepted, nor did the strangers he met find it unusual or unseemly that a demon in human form should be reserved and demanding.

He spoke only enough to convey the pretense that all he heard was already known to him, but inwardly he quaked, and when finally he sought slumber he found only a delirium of dreams.

The days that followed seemed but a continuation of initial nightmare. Gideon deemed it wise to remain as Dorcas Frye's guest although he came and went as he chose, as befitted a Prince of Hell. None durst question him closely, although he asked questions in plenty. Ready respect and ready answers were accorded him always.

He learned of the growth of Roodsford, of the initial coming to these bleak and barren shores at a date which sounded incredible to his ears. Still, that alone could explain the mouldering antiquity of their houses—so seemingly decrepit and poorly-fashioned on the exterior, but possessed of the labyrinthian passageways to the secret vaults beneath.

Gideon was told why the Indians had fled, but why the hunting and fishing were so good despite the fears of the animals who wisely shunned the spot; he learned, too, why crops grew lushly in rocky soil, and from whence came the exotic herbs used in charm and philtre.

There were those who spoke to him of the storms raised at sea, so that two stout and goodly ships had foundered off these shores. These had been salvaged, and some of the passengers saved, only to be given later

in sacrifice. Food and luxuries had been procured from the vessels, but his informants were most pleased that some of the bodies of the drowned had been delivered from the sea.

When told of the uses to which these corpses had been put, Gideon's mask slipped badly, but there was worse to come.

He learned, gradually, why there were no children amongst the inhabitants of Roodsford, and he wondered at the absence of a common graveyard.

And then, one night, he learned—

" 'Tis good you came," Dorcas Frye told him, between gulps of the dark, heavy rum he'd been consuming throughout the early evening. "For as your Master knows, our plans are near completion. Long have we bided on this bleak coast, abuilding for the future; living in hovels mean and small to avoid suspicion, and conducting our worship under ground. And now the time of reckoning draws nigh."

Gideon nodded as the old man poured a brimming beaker.

"I'm the leader, you might say, of the Coven. As such, I owe responsibility to none but the Master himself. I'm honored that you were sent to help me plan the Sabbath, for it means we are ready. Ready at last! Ready to rise and rule."

Ready to rise and rule. Gideon was on the track at last, and he drew his host out at length. Nor was the drunken oldster reluctant to babble freely.

The domain of Satan must expand, he said. Cotton Mather had not been far wrong when he said America was the witches' paradise. But it could never be held by ignorant old women or queer rural wizards. It was true that some thousands of these folk resided in New England, but they were for the most part isolated and unorganized. They limited their activities to clumsy attempts at brewing potions, or casting minor spells and afflictions on their enemies. Even the flying trips through the wild and smoke-crowned hills resulted in naught but nocturnal revels and a few meaningless ceremonies which could bring naught of pleasure to Satan the All-Lowest.

Besides, the persecution of witches had resulted in a sad diminution of

worship. It was time for Roodsford to act, and to this end had its people builded and abided.

Once let an organized band of believers fall upon the cities and claim them for the Master—then all would give way before them. There was unrest in the Colonies today; many people were tired of the restrictions of the Church and the taxes of the King. They would rise if given encouragement. For the others, there would be plague and pestilence, storm and famine, with the Devil's help.

It needed only bold action. A foray on a village, a descent upon a town, a gradual encroachment and engulfment, and within a year or two the country would be won. It was unlikely that Mother England would take much note of her recalcitrant colonial possessions, and if so, there were always storms and mistrials, and strange creatures awaited a summoning from sea-slimed depths.

Then would America become truly the land of Satan! The Antichrist would overcome the Kingdom of Heaven, and the unholy federation of the new world might even in time rise and smite the churches of the old.

"But there are so few of you," Gideon objected, knowing as he spoke that there was some mystery unrevealed.

"Yet as you realize, we cannot be harmed," Dorcas Frye chuckled in reply. "In that lies our strength. Once our enemies in town and village realize this, they will flee before us. Surely, you understand how it will be."

"Surely," Gideon nodded.

"And now we must prepare for the Sabbath, prepare for the coming of the Master. He will proclaim the day of his rule, order and instruct us from the Great Hill."

They could not be harmed.

Gideon pondered that as Dorcas droned on. Soon would come All-Hallows Eve and the night of sacrifice. Then would¹⁵ they strike and with a vengeance.

They had come here over a hundred years ago and there were no children.

Gideon pieced together the hints, and Dorcas told him of the coming

festival, of the sacrifices of cattle awaiting, of the children to be taken from the village of Wells.

They could not be harmed and there were no graveyards in Roodsford.

Gideon gazed at Dorcas, who spoke like a man, drank like a man, looked like a man, but who was more, or less, than any man alive.

Alive. The people of Roodsford were living dead.

That was the secret. For this they had sold their souls to Satan, so they could live past their appointed time without harm. In a flash Gideon recalled not only the absence of children, but the predominance of oldsters. He recalled the glee with which they told of the recovery of drowned bodies—new habitations for the lost souls, the damned souls. Soon an army of undead would be abroad in the land, striking terror and bringing death to the godly. Soon. Very soon.

"We'll learn on Sabbat-Eve," Dorcas droned.

Gideon knew that Sabbat-Eve was but three nights distant.

He excused himself, shortly thereafter, but not until the moon was high over the domed hills.¹⁶ He already knew that he had been assigned the seventh place in the Coven¹⁷ upon the coming night, but there yet remained the problem of what to do about it.

As he slipped through the darkness towards the trees that loomed beyond Roodsford, Gideon remembered only one thing.

There were only three nights until the Sabbat. . . .

V

The sun sank sullenly in the hovering western hills, and murky darkness fell upon New England. Prayers were muttered in ten thousand homes, services offered up in a hundred hamlets, charms recited and spells inscribed upon amulets, doors barred and churches bolted.

Was it not Hallow-Mass, the Night of the Black Lord? It was the night of the eldritch vision, of mildewed magic, of the flying ointment, of the heart torn bloody and dripping from the breast, of the black bullock of sacrifice, of the whimpering child ravished from the home, of the horned moon, of the fire of sacrifice.¹⁸

The Pasquantogs offered up strange prayers, and the squaws mumbled knowingly in the wigwam darkness. Old crones and hoary grand-

sires were absent from their hovels, and heifers and cats alike seemed to have disappeared. As for the great Cotton Mather, he was sick abed with a colic, devil-sent.

It was Hallow-Mass, and drums thundered on the northern hills, throbbing and pulsing, chanting of the Sabbat. Sometimes they whispered of secrets buried beneath stark New England crags that were old when man was young and *others* shambled through the blackness and howled worship in the autumn night. Sometimes they roared out a challenge of defiance to all sanity. Sometimes they beat out messages to listeners from Beyond, invitations to attend the revels to come.

Roodsford lay deserted beneath the gloating moon, but beyond the forest, at the Great Hill, all had assembled. The women leading the bullocks, the men smeared with the unguents of evil, the celebrants from afar had gathered to squat upon the mildewed turf within the circle of stones. Crouching and nestling beside them were pawing, furry hordes of night; the familiars, imp-spawn of Abaddon.

Gideon Godfrey stood beside the altar-stone, staring into the blackness ringing the circling hills. His was a signal honor, for he was one of the three appointed to lead the bullocks unto sacrifice. The tethered beasts lowed dolorously, shaking their massive heads. Black candles had been attached to their horns and scent sprinkled over their glossy bodies. Their hooves were gilded, manes braided, and they stood now inhaling the reek of Sabbat ointment rising from the half-naked throng of celebrants below the altar mound.

Gideon was grateful for his place apart with the bullocks, for the revels had started in earnest. Nameless bayers yammered through the echoing hills. The throng milled and shrilled and clamoured, dancing and shrieking in honor of Lucifer as the drums beat on, shaking the firmament with their promise of greater abandon to come.

Wine was passed, wine was drunk, wine was spilled and mingled with blood. Torches flared and faded through tableau after tableau of obscene celebration. Gideon stood impassive beside the bullocks, and at his side was Dorcas Frye, face enmasked with a hooded cowl from which goat-horns rose to signify his priesthood in the Sabbat ritual.

Neither spoke. Gideon had avoided Frye for three days now, and he

wondered if the old man suspected what it was he had done here in the forest when he stole away at midnight. Gideon wondered if he had a plan of his own—and Gideon waited, glancing from time to time at the altar-stone, on which a black cloth had been placed to hold the silver bowl and the silver knife of sacrifice.

But there would be no time for waiting, no time for wondering. The drums were building something in the darkness; something that throbbed and vibrated, something that soared and summoned. And now Dorcas was stepping up to the altar, wearing the Crown of Horns, and the first bullock was led forward, lowing, to kneel beneath the knife. The deed was done, the bowl was passed, and the drums thundered a litany to the Elder Shepherd.

Dorcas Frye stood alone now on the altar-top. Before the sacrifice of the other bullocks, the Summons would be made.

Dorcas held aloft the silver knife and the silver bowl. He signalled to the drummers in darkness and they fell silent.

Silently the celebrants moved forward, to gather below the altar mound and the altar stone. Dorcas bowed before the black cloth and began to chant.

Gideon recognized words, recognized syllables, recognized Latin cadence. But he did not recognize the response. The response was a drumming not made by drummers, a thunder not created by clouds. It was a roaring from *beneath* the very hills encircling them. And it rose, as Dorcas Frye's voice rose, as the faces of the Coven rose in expectation of the Coming. In a moment now—

Dorcas Frye's voice faltered. The thundering cadence missed a beat. He stared at the black altar-cloth in puzzlement. Gideon knew it was the time. He stepped forward, walked to the altar, stooped and came up in a single gesture with the silver knife. It flashed out, ripping at Frye's chest.

The oldster recoiled in sudden amazement, and a howl arose from the throng. As they hesitated, Gideon stabbed again, but saw no stain of blood appear. It was as he had dreaded.—Dorcas Frye was dead, yet alive.

There was one other way. He snatched the black covering from the altar and grasped the bulk beneath it—the bulk he had placed there three nights before. He raised it aloft and brought it down on Frye's horned head. There was a crunching sound, the sound made by the splinter of rotted bones.

Frye fell, and the cowl brushed from his face, revealed the wormy countenance of a thing long dead.

The crowd screamed, not only at the act but at the sight of Gideon Godfrey's weapon—the bulk of the great Bible he had rescued from its burial place beneath the stones and put on Satan's altar.

"Yes!" Gideon's voice rose exultant above their cries. "It's the Holy Bible, the Word of the Living God. And I am His Messenger, whom none may harm!"

Thunder echoed—true thunder, this time, from the clouds above. Out of the swirling sky came the blinding bolt, followed by the torrential tempest of sudden rain. And Gideon, crying the name of his God, descended from the altar, smiting and laying about him with the Bible for a weapon—and none that he touched could either flee or withstand him. Only corpses remained to litter the altar-base, to lie rotting in the rain. Gideon fought the fiends in a frenzy, fought them in darkness, touching them with God's word, muttering prayers that were curses and curses that were prayers. And in the end it was all over. He stood alone upon the field as the torrent washed away all but the foul odor of decay.

Then he fell upon his knees and gave thanks before setting out on the trail that led to the south. In the morning there would be clean light over the peaceful spires of Portsmouth and he would tell the good folk there that he had wandered lost in the wilderness these long weeks past.

Of Roodsford and its ways, of the peril just averted, Gideon would never speak. He knew that the village had fallen with its people and that birds and beasts would soon return there to claim as their own a land made free from the shadows of a fearsome blight. Soon Roodsford's very memory would be forgotten.

And that was as it should be, for come what may, witchcraft was now forever broken in New England. Satan's Servants were gone forever.

Index of Lovecraft's footnotes

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is necessarily only a partial listing of HPL's notations. Some of them exist in the form of addenda and sentences which he inserted in the text of the story. Others are indications for word-changes, insertions or deletions, all of which have been made in the text and are therefore unnecessary to repeat here. And true to form, HPL also added marginal comments of praise from time to time. The notations listed here are sufficient indication of the Lovecraft scholarship, passion for exactitude, and virtual omniscience.)

1. The original mss. gives the name as Rood-ford. HPL suggests "Roodsford" saying, "The hyphenated place name would not have occurred in early New England."
2. HPL says "Be careful about your archaisms. Certain antique spelling had vanished by 1672. Nouns were chiefly capitalized in ordinary text."
3. HPL noted that the book was printed in Boston in my original mss. and changed it to London, saying, "I doubt if Salem had a printing press as early as 1672. Nor were works of a general, non-theological character printed so early anywhere in the colonies."
4. The "or traders" was added by HPL who comments, "Savages didn't do much coastal navigation. Whites traded considerably."
5. HPL noted that I spoke of the "Church of New England" and altered it, saying, "There was no officially recognized Church of N. E. The two fully Puritan colonies—Mass. and Conn.—supported the orthodox church known eventually as the Congregational. R. I. represents a revolt against and a repudiation of this theocratic dominance."
6. HPL—"There would not be fallen leaves even in Southern Maine till well over the line in October. The height of autumn foliage in central New England is about Oct. 10 to 15."
7. The previous sentence was inserted by HPL with comment, "Travel was very slow in 1690." And on the obverse side of the mss. page, he lists four ferry passages by name, followed by such estimates as "On horseback—av. 5 MPH. With guides on foot—av. 3 MPH. Boston-Nemb.—40M. Newb.-Ports.—20 M. Ports-Roodf.—20 M. Time from Ports. to Roodf. should be 8 or 9 h., allowing for rest, delays. Starting 6 AM, intending to arrive at 3 PM, delays add 5 to 6 hours more—hence twilight or nocturnal advent would be correct." This is an excellent example of HPL's perfectionist approach to his own work.
8. HPL comments, "Probably no Indians in America before the post-glacial era—but let imagination have free scope!"
9. HPL reminds me of what I had forgotten and hence miswritten when he changes a word and says, "No witchcraft suspects were ever *burned* in North America."
10. HPL—"Gallows Hill, Salem, not so named till 1692 witchcraft." Since I revised chronology of story, it is now correct to refer to it.
11. Mss. originally spoke of venison and dried pemmican, but HPL changed,

saying, "Venison not so common, and journey not long enough for pemmican."

12. HPL—"We have to be careful about geography, picking a part of the coast not thickly settled in 1690."
13. I spoke of log houses, but HPL—"Log houses not used in New England—and never any cross on Puritan churches."
14. "Panels" in ms. HPL reproves—"No panelled doors at this period in small cottages."
15. I wrote "wouldst" but HPL struck it out, explaining, "Wouldst is second person singular. Beware of false archaisms, lest you fall into the misleading patois of some of Hodgson's stuff."
16. Orig. "Merrimack hills." But: "Merrimack too far south, or, in upper reaches, west, unless long-distance flights are intended."
17. HPL inserted "place in," saying, "A coven is a whole local unit of the cult. Roodsford would have but one."
18. HPL asks, "How local do you assume the Roodsford celebration to be? Is it a Sabbath confined to the one village coven or do others come from afar to participate? If the latter, insert on the evil travellers abroad in the night."

Three "Conservative" Articles

The Despised Pastoral

AMONG THE MANY and complex tendencies observable in modern poetry, or what answers for poetry in this age, is a decided but unjust scorn of the honest old pastoral, immortalised by Theocritus and Virgil, and revived in our own literature by Spenser.

Nor is this unfavourable attitude confined alone to the formal eclogue whose classical elements are so well described and exemplified by Mr. Pope. Whenever a versifier adorns his song with the pleasing and innocent imagery of this type of composition, or borrows its mild and sweet atmosphere, he is forthwith condemned as an irresponsible pedant and fossil by every little-wit critic in Grub-Street.

Modern bards, in their endeavour to display with seriousness and minute verisimilitude the inward operations of the human mind and emotions, have come to look down upon the simple description of ideal beauty, or the straightforward presentation of pleasing images for no other purpose than to delight the fancy. Such themes they deemed trivial and artificial, and altogether unworthy of an art whose design they take to be the analysis and reproduction of Nature in all her moods and aspects.

But in this belief, the writer cannot but hold that our contemporaries are misjudging the true province and functions of poesy. It was no starched classicist, but the exceedingly unconventional Edgar Allan Poe, who roundly denounced the melancholy metaphysicians and maintained that true poetry has for its first object "pleasure, not truth," and "indefinite pleasure instead of definite pleasure." Mr. Poe, in another essay, defined poetry as "the rhythmical creation of beauty," intimating that its concern for the dull or ugly aspects of life is slight indeed. That the

American bard and critic was fundamentally just in his deduction, seems well proved by a comparative survey of those poems of all ages which have lived, and those which have fallen into deserved obscurity.

The English pastoral, based upon the best models of antiquity, depicts engaging scenes of Arcadian simplicity, which not only transport the imagination through their intrinsic beauty, but recall to the scholarly mind the choicest remembrances of classical Greece and Rome. Though the combination of rural pursuits with polished sentiments and diction is patently artificial, the beauty is not a whit less; nor do the conventional names, phrases, and images detract in the least from the quaint agreeableness of the whole. The magic of this sort of verse is to any unprejudiced mind irresistible, and is capable of evoking a more deliciously placid and refreshing train of pictures in the imagination, than may be obtained from any more realistic species of composition. Every untainted fancy begets ideal visions of which the pastoral forms a legitimate and artistically necessary reflection.

It is not impossible that the intellectual upheaval attendant upon the present conflict will bring about a general simplification and rectification of taste, and an appreciation of the value of pure imaginary beauty in a world so full of actual misery, which may combine to restore the despised pastoral to its proper station.

Time and Space

Of the various conceptions brought before the human mind by the advance of Science, what can be compared in strangeness and magnitude with that of eternity and infinity as presented by modern astronomy? Nothing more deeply disturbs our settled egotism and self-importance, than the realisation of man's utter insignificance which comes with a knowledge of his position in time and space.

Life, or at least life upon our earth and the other planets of the solar system, extends but a little distance, relatively speaking, into the past; for the nebular hypothesis of Laplace can trace the ancestry of the sun and planets to a gaseous, incandescent mass which could under no circum-

stances support the vital principle. And this condition, removed from us by innumerable years, is obviously but a matter of yesterday as eternity is reckoned. Nor is the future prospect of much greater extent. In a few billion years, a mere second in eternity, the sun and planets must lose the heat bequeathed to them by the parent nebula, and roll black, frozen, and untenanted through space. Therefore the very existence of life and thought is but a matter of a moment in unbounded time; the merest incident in the history of the universe. An hour ago we did not exist; in another hour we shall have ceased to be.

Turning to the consideration of infinite space, we are no less paralysed with "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." In our own solar system we discover the apparently boundless earth to be a comparatively small planet, and in the immediate universe we find the entire solar system but an inconsequential molecule. What, then, shall we think when we learn that all that universe is but one of an infinite number of similar star-clusters, only the nearest of which are to be seen from our part of space? And besides all this, we must ever recall that space has no boundary; that the illimitable reaches of vacancy extend endlessly out beyond our sight or comprehension, perhaps beyond the apparently infinite region of the luminiferous ether and beyond control of the laws of motion and gravitation. What mind can venture to depict those remote realms where form, dimensions, matter, and energy may all be subject to undreamt of modifications and grotesque manifestations? All that we know, see, dream, or imagine, is less than a grain of dust in infinity. It is virtually nothing, or at best no more than a mathematical point.

But whilst all these considerations may well serve to diminish the presumption of the petty philosopher, they should not be permitted to discourage humanity in its devotion to the ideals it has always pursued. Life and mankind have their place in the natural plan, however infinitesimal that place may be; and the laws of Nature are too obvious and well-defined to warrant a feeling of futility and unrest. The essential reality and rationality of our aspirations and moral code should, notwithstanding all the revelations of Science, be apparent even to the most thorough materialist.

Merlinus Redivivus

In humanity's age-long struggle for emancipation from the ignoble chains of superstition, no retarding influence has been more potent than that of national distress. The inevitable result of a great war or social crisis, is to cloud the atmosphere for rational perception; to inflame the imagination beyond the realm of calm analysis, and to give unbounded licence to untrustworthy impressions, superficial doctrines, antiquated fallacies, distorted coincidences, psychopathic delusions, and irresponsible thoughts to which wishes alone are the fathers.

Throughout the war-torn world there is now being born a more dangerous and degrading era of superstition than history records for many centuries past. Excited by a wild desire to communicate with the vast numbers of the honoured dead; rebellious against the thought that these splendid souls are totally lost to the earth; the public have turned with the irrationality of deep grief to the hoary frauds and delusions of cruder ages, and have lent willing ears to the charlatans and eccentrics whose claims of spiritualistic insight are normally dismissed with a smile.

Amongst the uneducated, an atavistical relapse of this sort was but natural. We do not marvel at the legends of the Marne where the shades of our old English bowmen are said to have come to the assistance of the army and saved the day; or of Mons, where angels are reputed to have battled on the side of right against the Hun. These, and the usual mediumistic nonsense and amulet-wearing of the ignorant, were to be expected. But we do marvel at the extent to which the scientific perspective of supposedly wiser classes has become distorted.

Spiritualism, whose adherents now number many former men of science who should know better, is a frank surrender of judgment to vague subjective impressions. None knows better than the sober psychologist how vivid some apparently occult manifestations may be to certain types of persons; yet the sober thinker can see further than the spiritualist, and can analyse the phenomena, tracing them to a material cause in the consciousness of the subject.

The prime obstacle to truth in this struggle, is the will. Overpowered

by a desire to believe in the supernatural, men are everywhere ignoring patent scientific principles and encroaching upon borderlands where evidence is highly coloured with illusion. Against common sense is arrayed a flimsy mass of dreamstuff which under ordinary conditions would be laughed out of court.

Were mental communication really possible, or the dead able to make themselves known to the living, it is safe to state that the world would be a very different place. Secrecy would be non-existent, and death would be no mystery. In fact, the very rarity and frivolity of alleged spiritual messages are enough to condemn them as frauds or hallucinations.

However general may be the relapse of the world into mediaeval credulity, it is to be hoped that Anglo-Saxon sense and conservatism may exempt our particular realm from so pitiable an intellectual debacle.

—*The Conservative*
July 1918

At the Root

TO THOSE who look beneath the surface, the present universal war drives home more than one anthropological truth in striking fashion; and of these verities none is more profound than that relating to the essential immutability of mankind and its instincts.

Four years ago a large part of the civilised world laboured under certain biological fallacies which may, in a sense, be held responsible for the extent and duration of the present conflict. These fallacies, which were the foundation of pacifism and other pernicious forms of social and political radicalism, dealt with the capability of man to evolve mentally beyond his former state of subservience to primitive instinct and pugnacity, and to conduct his affairs and international or inter-racial relations on a basis of reason and good-will. That belief in such capability is unscientific and childishly naive, is beside the question. The fact remains, that the most civilised part of the world, including our own Anglo-Saxondom, did entertain enough of these notions to relax military vigilance, lay stress on points of honour, place trust in treaties, and permit a powerful and unscrupulous nation to indulge unchecked and unsuspected in nearly fifty years of preparation for world-wide robbery and slaughter. We are reaping the result of our simplicity.

The past is over. Our former follies we can but regret, and expiate as best we may by a crusade to the death against the Trans-Rhenane monster which we allowed to grow and flourish beneath our very eyes. But the future holds more of responsibility, and we must prepare to guard against any renascence of the benevolent delusions that four years of blood have barely been able to discard forever the sentimental standpoint, and to view our species through the cold eyes of science alone. We must recognise the essential underlying savagery in the animal called man, and return to older and sounder principles of national life and defence. We must realise that man's nature will remain the same so long as he

remains man; that civilisation is but a slight coverlet beneath which the dominant beast sleeps lightly and ever ready to awake. To preserve civilisation, we must deal scientifically with the brute element, using only genuine biological principles. In considering ourselves, we think too much of ethics and sociology—too little of plain natural history. We should perceive that man's period of historical existence, a period so short that his physical constitution has not been altered in the slightest degree, is insufficient to allow of any considerable mental change. The instincts that governed the Egyptians and the Assyrians of old, govern us as well; and as the ancients thought, grasped, struggled, and deceived, so shall we moderns continue to think, grasp, struggle, and deceive in our inmost hearts. Change is only superficial and apparent.

Man's respect for the imponderables varies according to his mental constitution and environment. Through certain modes of thought and training it can be elevated tremendously, yet there is always a limit. The man or nation of high culture may acknowledge to great lengths the restraints imposed by conventions and honour, but beyond a certain point primitive will or desire cannot be curbed. Denied anything ardently desired, the individual or state will argue and parley just so long—then, if the impelling motive be sufficiently great, will cast aside every rule and break down every acquired inhibition, plunging viciously after the object wished; all the more fantastically savage because of previous repression. The sole ultimate factor in human decisions is physical force. This we must learn, however repugnant the idea may seem, if we are to protect ourselves and our institutions. Reliance on anything else is fallacious and ruinous. Dangerous beyond description are the voices sometimes heard today, decrying the continuance of armament after the close of the present hostilities.

The specific application of the scientific truth regarding man's native instincts will be found in the adoption of a post-bellum international programme. Obviously, we must take into account the primordial substructure and arrange for the upholding of culture by methods which will stand the acid test of stress and conflicting ambitions. In disillusioned diplomacy, ample armament, and universal military training alone

will be found the solution of the world's difficulties. It will not be a perfect solution, because humanity is not perfect. It will not abolish war, because war is the expression of a natural human tendency. But it will at least produce an approximate stability of social and political conditions, and prevent the menace of the entire world by the greed of any one of its constituent parts.

The Materialist Today

TODAY A FRESH wave of interest in philosophical speculation has arisen. The dissolution of old doctrines under the influence of science in the nineteenth century gave rise for a time to a rational materialism of which Huxley and Haeckel were conspicuous exemplars; but the later crumbling of moral standards, amidst the dizziness of mental liberation, has brought about a sense of restlessness and cerebral panic, and for the moment we witness the amusing spectacle of a reactionary scrambling for shelter beneath the wing of a supernatural belief either blindly conceived without intelligent reflection, or tenuously modified to accommodate as many angles of scientific truth as can be accommodated by a system of extra-rational origin.

Hence spring Fundamentalism and Modernism: both defensive emotional reactions against the ethical chaos of the present; and, as such, entitled to the sincere respect of all who realize that the sole beauty of life resides in its traditional patterns. It would not be the wish of any responsible materialist to destroy or combat the major social conditions at which these fervid believers are aiming: and the utmost attack of logic on faith serves only to replace an irrational with a rational reason for orderly life and thought.

The materialist denies that any standard is divine or absolute, and would free our conceptions of conduct from those supernatural fetters which impart a false perspective and cause the former believer to lose his moral sense as soon as he loses his faith. Conduct, of course, is only a side issue in the search for truth. But, so far as the modern materialist is interested in it at all, he merely recommends with gentle cynicism the adherence of each person to the ethical system in which he was reared, as constituting the only authentic source, in a purposeless cosmos without absolute standards, of those relative standards necessary to the orderly life and mental comfort of mankind.

Many specious arguments continue to be advanced by those labouring for a survival of religion. Fundamentalists, of course, do not argue; but the Modernists are very ingenious in adapting the language and conceptions of their ancient enemy, science, to their own uses, thus hoping to effect a reconciliation with that powerful adversary. Foremost among their contentions is that which affirms the existence of a "soul" and the truth of immortality by proclaiming mind a *Thing* and there-upon invoking the scientific principle of the conservation of matter and energy to prove that it can never be destroyed—an argument, of course, which not only confuses the general mental principle with individual personality, but forgets that the law of conservation denies the fresh creation as well as the destruction of matter and energy, a point which would not allow for the birth of new souls!

To the materialist, *mind* seems very clearly not a *thing*, but a *mode of motion or form of energy*.

Now, altho the sum of energy in the universe is (speaking without reference to very recent discoveries in intra-atomic physics and chemistry) virtually indestructible, we see very clearly that it is most eminently subject to transformations from one form to another. Mechanical energy becomes electricity under the appropriate conditions, and, under other conditions, that electricity becomes light and heat. Nothing is *lost*, but all is *changed*.

Now I regard the vital principle as just such a form of energy—and *mind* is only one of the many complex manifestations of that principle. It is a product and attribute of certain forms and processes of matter; and when that matter is disintegrated, it ceases to exist—just as molecular heat ceases to exist upon the dispersal or disintegration of the material molecules which make it possible. Nothing is *lost*, any more than when electrical energy is transformed to luminous energy: but a complete metamorphosis occurs, and the identity of mind and life becomes effaced as the units of energy pass away in other forms—mostly radiant heat and other waves in the ether. Mind is no more immortal than a candle flame. The flame is just as *immortal*, if we wish to take a poetic view and reflect that the units of energy therein are

never lost to the universe, but merely dissipated and incorporated into other forms and phenomena.

“Imperious Caesar, dead and turn’d to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.”

One might add, as noted above, that ultra-modern discovery, as based upon the phenomena of radio-activity, has opened wide and strange vistas, and perhaps defeated *in the last analysis* the idea of the indestructibility of matter and energy. Whilst matter and energy are clearly indestructible so far as any hitherto understood principles are concerned, it seems increasingly clear that cosmic force and substance have other and deeper relations and limitations—whose kinship to the phenomena we know is like that of an hour-hand to a minute- or second-hand on a clock.

It seems, in the light of recent discoveries, that all matter is in a state of balance betwixt formation and disintegration,—evolution and devolution—and that the infinite cosmos is like a vast patch of summer sky out of which little cirrus clouds gather here and there, presently to be dissolved into blankness again. The universes we know correspond to the little cirrus clouds of that summer sky, being merely transient aggregations of electrons condensed from that field of ungrouped electrons which we call space, and soon to be dissolved into that space again. This process of formation and destruction is the fundamental attribute of all entity—it is infinite Nature, and it always has been and always will be. The world, life, and universe we know, are only a passing cloud—yesterday in eternity it did not exist, and tomorrow its existence will be forgotten. Nothing matters—all that happens happens through the automatic and inflexible interacting of the electrons, atoms and molecules of infinity according to patterns which are co-existent with basic entity itself. The general idea is that of a kaleidoscope with its endless rearrangements—there is no object or purpose in ultimate creation, since all is a ceaseless repetitive cycle of transitions from nothing back to nothing again.

However, all this need give worry to none. The aspirations of the

human spirit, so movingly cited by Theists, are pretty enough in themselves; and one need neither go to the trouble of breaking them up and finding their physiological components (although that is relatively easy to do) nor impute to them a cosmic significance which, though poetic to imagine, is certainly not logically deducible from their existence and characteristics. It is most sensible just to accept the universe as it is, and be done with it. All is illusion, hollowness and nothingness—but what does that matter? Illusions are all we have, so let us pretend to cling to them; they lend dramatic values and comforting sensations of purpose to things which are really valueless and purposeless. All one can logically do is to jog placidly and cynically on, according to the artificial standards and traditions with which heredity and environment have endowed him. He will get most satisfaction in the end by keeping faithful to these things.

Vermont: A First Impression

TO THE Southern New Englander entering Vermont for the first time there is a sense of mystic revivification. On the towns of the lower coast the blight of mutation and modernity has descended. Weird metamorphoses & excrescences, architectural & topographical, mark a menacing tyranny of mechanism and vice-royalty of engineering, which are fast hurrying the present scene out of all linkage with its historic antecedents and setting it adrift anchorless and all but traditionless in alien oceans. Swart foreign forms, heirs to moods and impulses antipodal to those which moulded our heritage, surge in endless streams along smoke-clouded and lamp-dazzled streets, moving to strange measures and inculcating strange customs. All through the nearer countryside the stigmata of change are spreading. Reservoirs, billboards and concrete roads, power lines, garages and flamboyant inns, squalid immigrant nests and grimy mill villages,—these things, and things like them, have brought ugliness, tawdriness and commonplaceness to the urban penumbra. Only in the remoter backwoods can one find the pristine and ancestral beauty which was Southern New England's, or the unmixed signs of that continuous native life whose deep roots make it the one authentic outgrowth of the landscape. There are traces enough to allure and tantalize, but not enough to satisfy. With our keenest pleasure and satisfaction is mixed a certain melancholy; for it is upon the ghost of something beloved and departed, rather than upon the thing itself, that we gaze. Our own country and history seem subtly dissolving away from us, and we clutch frantically at the symbols through which our imaginations may momentarily recapture a past which is really our own.

With such a mood, softened by the beauty of the hills and river bends which flank the gateway, the Southern New Englander enters Vermont. He has seen its hills for some time across the Connecticut, domed and undulant, and shining with a clear emerald light unmarred by vapor

or defacement. Then comes a sweeping downward curve, and beyond limpid water the climbing terraces of an old town loom into sight, as a loved, remembered picture might appear when the leaves of a childhood volume are slowly turned. It is plain from the first that this town is not quite like those one has left behind. Roofs and steeples and chimneys, prosaic enough in the telling, here cluster together on the green river-bluff in some magical collocation that stirs dim memories. Something in the contours, something in the setting, has power to touch deep viol-strings of feeling which are ancestral if one be young and personal if one be old. The whole scene vaguely brings us a fleeting quality we have known before. We have seen such towns long ago, climbing above deep river-valleys and rearing their old brick walls beside sloping cobbled streets. Grandeur may be wanting, but the marvel of rekindled vision is there. Something is alive that is dead elsewhere; something that we, or the blood that is in us, can recognize as more closely akin to ourselves than anything in the busy cosmopolis to the southward. This, in fine, is a surviving fragment of the old America: it is what our other towns used to be in the days when they were most themselves, the days when they housed their own people and gave birth to all the little legends and bits of lore which make them glamorous and significant in the eyes of their children.

By an ancient covered bridge we ride back through decades and enter the enchanted city of our fathers' world. We had not thought such bridges still existed, for southward the last of them was demolished years ago. The river valley is deep, and as we come from the wooden tunnel we feel the kind guardianship of the ancient hills and the eternal streams from unknown fountains of the north. On past an island stepping-stone we go, and up the homely slopes of the dawn-fresh town. There is life here, and the clatter of modern industry; but somehow the life and industry are more our own than the febrile bustle to the southward. It is the fresher, more coherent vitality that springs from continuity with ancestral sources; the vitality our own coastal region might have had under different dispensations of history. This, then is Brattleboro—the town where Kipling wrote and Royall Tyler rhymed.

Say what you will of changing Vermont life, the outsider can still find in it far more of basic worth, far more of the unmixed primal fund of mood and fibre which was New England's supreme heritage, than the commerce plagued cities to the south can show. Into this hive of half-concealed glamour we ascend, stirred and rejuvenated by memories and influences too ethereal to define. The kinship and hospitality of the Main Street spread over us and encourage us to climb higher into the charmed sea of westerly greenness to which these atavistic bricks form pylon and peristyle. The wild hills are before us, where song and witchery lurk.

And now we cast off all allegiance to modern things; to change, and the rule of steel and steam, and the crumbling of ancient visions and simple impulses. The tar and concrete roads, and the vulgar world that bred them, have ended; and we wind rapt and wondering over elder and familiar ribbons of rutted whiteness which curl past alluring valleys and traverse old wooden bridges in the lee of green slopes. The nearness and intimacy of the little domed hills have become almost breathtaking. Their steepness and abruptness hold nothing in common with the humdrum, standardized world we know, and we cannot help feeling that their outlines have some strange and almost forgotten meaning like vast hieroglyphs left by a rumored titan race whose glories live only in rare deep dreams. We climb and plunge fantastically as we thread this hypnotic landscape. Time has lost itself in the labyrinths behind, and around us stretch only the flowering waves of faery. Tawdriness is not there, but instead, the recaptured beauty of vanished centuries—the hoary groves, the untinted pastures hedged with gay blossoms, and the small brown farmsteads nestling amidst huge trees beneath vertical precipices of fragrant briar and meadow-grass. Even the sunlight assumes a supernal glamour, as if some special atmosphere or exhalation mantled the whole region. There is nothing like it save in the magic vistas that sometimes form the backgrounds of Italian primitives. Sodoma and Leonardo saw such expanses, but only in the distance, and through the vaultings of Renaissance arcades. We rove at will through the midst

of the picture, and find in its necromancy a thing we have known or inherited and for which we have always been vainly searching.

At the heart of this weirdly beautiful Arcadia Vermont's gentle poet dwells. One with his hereditary hills and groves, with the spreading, venerable trees and the ancient peaked roofs of the vine-banked cottages, lives Arthur Goodenough, singer of the olden strain and last of the long line of New England's Puritan oracles. Tilling ancestral acres in the good old way, and keeping alive beside his daily hearth the well-loved thoughts and customs of our Golden Age, he is vastly more than a retrospective teller of bygone tales. Alone amongst the surviving choir he truly leads the pastoral life he breathes; so that we need not wonder at the flawless authenticity of his message. He has prolonged our old New England in himself, and his stately charm and genial hospitality are as truly poems as anything the pen could write. Lovely beyond words is the realm over which the poet holds agrestic sway. The ancient house on the hillside, embowered in greenery and shadowed by a lone leafy monarch; the dream-stirring slope to the westward, where earth's beauty melts into the cosmic glory of sunset; the narrow beckoning roads, the outspread dew-glistening meadows, and the hint of spectral woodlands and valleys in the background—all these mark out a perfect poet's seat and cause us to thank Fate that for once in history a man and his setting are well matched.

Northward from Brattleboro the charm still holds. There are glorious sweeps of vivid valley where great cliffs rise, New England's virgin granite showing grey and austere through the verdure that scales the crests. There are gorges where untamed streams leap, bearing down toward the river the unimagined secrets of a thousand pathless peaks. Narrow, half-hidden roads bore their way through solid luxuriant masses of forest, among whose primal trees whole armies of elemental spirits lurk. Archaic covered bridges linger fearsomely out of the past in pockets of the hills, and here and there a summit bears a tiny hamlet of trim clean old houses and steeples that Time has never been able to sully.

Now to the right the river shimmers mystically around its bends,

while New Hampshire's granite vistas stretch panoramically toward the unknown East, whence far birds bring legends of the sea's wonder. Putney, Grout, Westminster—one by one new piquancies unfold and retire as the traveller fares northward. The steep riverbank quaintness and ancient Yankeedom of Bellows Falls appears, a bridge is crossed, and suddenly one realizes that Vermont has been left behind.

But it is still visible for leagues across the river, veiled in distance and golden with elfin light. The spell of the past has not departed, for Vermont has given us something that we have always sought, and that can never be effaced from our spirit. Dim on the horizon the purpling hills rise, Ascutney towering in lordship above its neighbours. A bend shuts it from sight, and we are alone with our meditations.

*The Battle That Ended the Century**

(MS. Found in a Time Machine)

ON THE eve of the year 2001 a vast crowd of interested spectators were present amidst the romantic ruins of Cohen's Garage on the former site of New York, to witness a fistic encounter between two renowned champions of the strange-story firmament—Two-Gun Bob, the Terror of the Plains, and Knockout Bernie, the Wild Wolf of West Shokan. Before the battle the auguries were determined by the venerated Thibetan Lama Bill Lum Li, who evoked the primal serpent-god of Valusia and found unmistakable signs of victory for both sides. Cream-puffs were inattentively vended by Wladislaw Brenryk—the partakers being treated by the official surgeons, Drs. D. H. Killer and M. Gin Brewery.

The gong was sounded at 39 o'clock, after which the air grew red with the gore of battle, lavishly flung about by the mighty Texas slaughterer. Very shortly the first actual damage occurred—the loosening of several

* (Members of the so-called "Lovecraft Circle," principally fellow-writers, received a leaflet printing of this whimsy in mid-1934. Most of them were hilariously taken off in this piece, and, though Lovecraft solemnly denied that he was the author of it, none can doubt that he had a hand in the writing of it. "It is scarcely the thing a staid old-timer would be likely to start," he wrote to Duane W. Rimel, August 10th of that year. "I . . . was considerably amused by it. If you'll look more closely, you'll see that I was *not* left out—since 'Horse-Power Hateart' can scarcely refer to anyone but myself. Oddly, the only name given without a comic twist is that of Otis Adelbert Kline. I don't know why they left him as he was—it would have been easy to think up something like Oatmeal Addlepate Crime." The references made were all within Lovecraft's intimate knowledge—to R. E. Howard's passion for fight and battle descriptions in his stories, to August Derleth's lengthy Sac Prairie Saga, to his own revision practices, to Robert S. Carr's Russian sojourn, to Seabury Quinn's affiliation with the morticians of the country, and so forth. A glossary of names is appended to the whimsy for the enlightenment of such readers as may not be familiar with the dramatis personae in whimsical guise.)

teeth in both participants. One, bouncing out from the Wolf's mouth after a casual tap from Two-Gun, described a parabola toward Yucatan; being retrieved in a hasty expedition by Messrs. A. Hijacked Barrell and G. A. Scotland. This incident was used by the eminent sociologist and ex-poet Frank Chimesleep Short, Jr., as the basis of a ballad of proletarian propaganda with three intentionally defective lines. Meanwhile a potentate from a neighbouring kingdom, The Effjay of Akkamin (also known to himself as an amateur critic), expressed his frenzied disgust at the technique of the combatants, at the same time peddling photographs of the fighters (with himself in the foreground) at five cents each.

In round two the Shokan Soaker's sturdy right crashed through the Texan's ribs and became entangled in sundry viscera; thereby enabling Two-Gun to get in several telling blows on his opponent's unprotected chin. Bob was greatly annoyed by the effeminate squeamishness shown by several onlookers as muscles, glands, gore, and bits of flesh were spattered over the ringside. During this round the eminent magazine cover anatomist Mrs. M. Blunderage portrayed the battlers as a pair of spirited nudes behind a thin vein of conveniently curling tobacco-smoke, while the late Mr. C.-Half-Cent provided a sketch of three Chinamen clad in silk hats and galoshes—this being his own original conception of the affray. Among the amateur sketches made was one by Mr. Goofy Hooey, which later gained fame in an annual Cubist exhibit as *Abstraction of an Eradicated Pudding*.

In the third round the fight grew really rough; several ears and other appurtenances being wholly or partly detached from the frontier battler by the Shokan Shocker. Somewhat irritated, Two-Gun countered with some exceptionally sharp blows; severing many fragments from his aggressor, who continued to fight with all his remaining members.

The entire affair was reported by Mr. W. Lablache Talcum, his copy being revised by Horse Power Hateart. Throughout the event notes were taken by M. le Comte d'Erlette for a 200 volume novel-cycle in the Proustian manner, with illustrations by Mrs. Blunderage. Mr. J. Caesar Warts frequently interviewed both battlers and all the more important spectators; obtaining as souvenirs (after a spirited struggle with the

Effjay) an autographed quarter-rib of Two-Gun's, in an excellent state of preservation, and three finger-nails from the Wild Wolf. Lighting effects were supplied by the Electrical Testing Laboratories under the supervision of H. Kanebrake. The fourth round was prolonged eight hours at the request of the official artist, Mr. H. Wanderer, who wished to put certain shadings of fantasy into his representation of the Wolf's depleted physiognomy, which included several supernumerary details supplied by the imagination.

The climax came in round five, when the Texas Tearer's left passed entirely through Battling Bernie's face and brought both sluggers to the mat. This was adjudged a finish by the referee—Robertieff Essovitch Karovsky, the Muscovite Ambassador—who, in view of the Shokan Shocker's gory state, declared the latter to be essentially liquidated according to the Marxian ideology. The Wild Wolf entered an official protest, which was promptly overruled on the ground that all the points necessary to technical death were theoretically present.

The gonfalons sounded a fanfare of triumph for the victor, while the technically vanquished was committed to the care of the official mortician, Mr. Teaberry Quince. During the ceremonies the alleged corpse strolled away for a bite of bologna, but a tasteful cenotaph was supplied to furnish a focus for the rites. The funeral procession was headed by a gaily bedecked hearse driven by Malik Taus, the Peacock Sultan, who sat on the box in West Point uniform and turban, and steered an expert course over several hedges and stone walls. About half way to the cemetery the cortege was rejoined by the corpse, who sat beside Sultan on the box and finished his bologna sandwich, his ample girth having made it impossible to enter the hastily selected cenotaph. An appropriate dirge was rendered by Maestro Sing Lee Bawledout on the piccolo: Messrs. De Silva, Brown, and Henderson's celebrated aria, *Never Swat a Fly* from the old cantata *Just Imagine*, being chosen for that occasion. The only detail omitted from the funeral was the interment, which was interrupted by the disconcerting news that the official gate-taker—the celebrated financier and Ivar K. Rodent, Esq.,—had absconded with the entire proceeds.

Mr. Talcum's report of the event, illustrated by the well-known

artist Klarkash-Ton (who esoterically depicted the fighters as boneless fungi) was printed—after repeated rejections by the discriminating editor of the *Windy City Grab-Bag*—as a broadside by W. Peter Chef. This, through the efforts of Otis Adelbert Kline, was finally placed on sale in the bookshop of Smearum & Weep, three and a half copies finally being disposed of through the alluring catalogue description supplied by Samuelus Philanthropus, Esq.

In response to this wide demand, the text was finally reprinted by Mr. De Merit in the polychromatic pages of *Wurst's Weakly Americana* under the title *Has Science Been Outmoded? or, The Dwellers in the Garage*. No copies, however, remain in circulation; since all which were not snapped up by fanatical bibliophiles were seized by the police in connection with the libel suit of the Wild Wolf, who was, after several appeals ending with the World Court, adjudged not only officially alive but the clear winner of the combat.

Glossary of Names.

Two-Gun Bob—Robert E. Howard

Knockout Bernie, the Wild Wolf of West Shokan—Bernard Austin Dwyer
(of West Shokan, New York)

Bill Lum Li—William Lumley

Wladislaw Brenryk—Andrew Brosnatch

D. H. Killer—David H. Keller

M. Gin Brewery—Miles G. Breuer

A. Hijacked Barrell—A. Hyatt Verrill

G. A. Scotland—George Allan England

Frank Chimesleep Short, Jr.—Frank Belknap Long, Jr.

The Effjay of Akkamin—Forrest J. Ackerman

Mrs. M. Blunderage—M. Brundage

Mr. C.-Half-Cent—C. C. Senf

W. Lablache Talcum—Wilfred Blanch Talman

Horse-Power Hateart—Howard Phillips Lovecraft

M. le Comte d'Erlette—August Derleth

J. Caesar Warts—Julius Schwartz

H. Kanebrake—H. C. Koenig

H. Wanderer—Howard Wandrei

Robertieff Essovitch Karovsky—Robert S. Carr

Teaberry Quince—Seabury Quinn

Malik Taus, the Peacock Sultan—E. Hoffmann Price

Sing Lee Bawledout—Franklin Lee Baldwin

Ivar K. Rodent—Ivar Krueger

Klarkash-Ton—Clark Ashton Smith

Windy City Grab-Bag—*Weird Tales*

W. Peter Chef—W. Paul Cook

Samuelus Philanthropus—Samuel Loveman

Mr. De Merit—A. Merritt

Wurst's Weekly Americana—*The American Weekly*

Letters from August Derleth to Francis T. Laney, July 30, 1934.

"... There's no reason why the *Battle That Ended the Century* should not be reprinted. I believe that HPL did have a hand in it, regardless of his denials."

Letter from Clark Ashton Smith to Duane W. Rimel, September 13, 1934.

"I enjoyed hugely the *Ms. Found in a Time-Machine*, and think that there is no doubt whatever about the authorship. HPL may, however, have been assisted a little in this lucubration by the fertile brain of R. H. Barlow. The names were a positive scream. . . ."

Letter from H. P. Lovecraft to Duane W. Rimel, August 10, 1934.

"As for that recent spoof in weird & science fiction circles, I was amused to note how many have attributed it to me . . . despite the fact that it is scarcely the sort of thing a staid old-timer would be likely to start. Especially since the Eastern recipients say it came long before I passed through Washington. I found a copy when I got home, & was considerably amused by it. . . . Curious that one of the corrections looked like my script—I didn't notice it, but will take another glance if I can find the thing."

Notes

For *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*

OBED MARSH in Polynesia discovers temple of evil knowledge & learns of undersea people & their ways. Gets jewellery from priests. Learns hideous price—forgotten history of Ponape. (How to get victims? Only communication in Pacific. Incantation that will open vent. Prayer to god of sea. Reef rises) Learns incantation to call them up from the sea. Rows out of harbour to farthestmost reef where sea bottom suddenly becomes deep, & drops message. *They* come. Bargain. Bring things to reef—sacrifices brought to them. Introduce cult of Dagon. Then they wish to enter town—opposition—poison wells, (but put antidote in wells) & only those left who will participate in cult and mingle with Them (*foregoing deleted.*)

Capt. Obed Marsh, in Polynesia, finds people with strange ornaments. Learns of trade with undersea people. Discovers source & ritual (Invokes people from deep & concludes horrible bargain on reef.) (People begin to disappear from Innsmouth when moon is dark. At first Marsh abducts and delivers, then Things venture on shore for themselves. (Complaint on both sides) Trinkets and beads also given. Things like outer air, recalling older phases of their history. Demand a right to live in village. Some seen and killed. Awful isolated happenings. (Riots) (Marsh enlists aid on his side—tells) (*foregoing deleted*)

In era of declining prosperity groups of Innsmouth men take to worshipping a sea-god of which Capt. Obed Marsh heard in Polynesia. A god who brought rich fishing and precious ornaments to his devotees when offered a human sacrifice. In 1840 they make such a sacrifice off the edge of a reef where the sea-bottom abruptly drops. There appear horrible beings who strike horrible bargain. Moonless nights. Disappearances. Sign and eventually speech languages develop. Trinkets brought and distributed. People not in secret become suspicious. Watch

group. Follow and discover something. Marsh and others imprisoned (1846). Beings, cut off from supply, swim to shore and start reign of terror. (Outside world hears of epidemic and riots.) All opponents killed off—many women commit suicide or vanish. Things refuse wholly to leave the town. Horrible incidents—hybridisation. Marsh dares not call in outside world—Things threaten to rise in limitless numbers. Compromise reached—secret habitation, since they would prefer to avoid general war. They fear mankind could worst them in the end. All (except passive acquiescers) left alive in village belong to Dagon cult. Things are chary about giving treasures, but drive fish up. Unusual abundance noted. Marsh manages to get trinkets &c which ensure a fair supply of ornaments. Melts them and sells gold, and sells some as they are in distant ports. Strange accounts of jewellery worn by Marshes and sold by them and others. Queer looks of Innsmouth people noticed after Civil War time. Marshes still operate metal refinery. Majority fish. Victims of sacrifice selected at Dagon meetings.

Stock decayed since 1812.

Hybrid generations

Halfbreeds 1 b. 1847

Quarters 2 b. 1877

Eighths 3 b. 1907

Things don't try to capture those outside cult—whose relatives might tell—except in silencing possible informers.

Old Zadok Allen is a secretly unreconciled survivor—was 15 at time of massacre. Cowed and afraid. Promised not to tell. Has told certain people, but only when drunk. Nobody believes him, any way. Townsfolk discourage his talking. Loafs around fire station or wanders around town. Narrator gets bootleg whiskey (and leads h) in hope of finding him. Does so, and leads him down to deserted waterfront beyond break-water's end.

Innsmouth fishermen hostile to others who fish on their grounds.

Federal agents disappear often.

Narrator excites local curiosity.

* Hears story from Zadok. Told (late for) bus** has had an accident—No trip. Gets room in hotel. Third story facing rear. Cannot sleep. Hears disturbing voices below. Bad vocal timbres. (After) View of Harbour from window. Sees (d) Devil (r) Reef in moonlight. Apparently alive with seals. Lines of swimming forms in sea. Moving in both directions (to) (from) between reef and mouth of Mawtuxet. Lights in factory, also in Order of Dagon Hall. Looks again. Then silence. Decides not to retire (but to steal out &) After light is out, hears creaking floor. Door is softly tried.† Fishy odour very strong. Tries to light up again, finds power is cut off. More creaking. Retreat. Now determined to escape from hotel and walk out of town. There is a full moon, and he has flashlight. (Knows next room is vacant, so unscrews each of doors between) Softly opens single window and looks out. Sheer drop of three stories to yard, but sees lower buildings abutting toward north and south—two rooms beyond. Heavy creaking and hideous voices on stairs. (Light) Fluttering light in hall outside (implied) shewn through (crack under) transom of door. A knock—which becomes more and more insistent. Decides must escape by breaking connecting doors and (though passkey work may frustrate) reaching either N. or S. room—second away which commands lower floors. (Heedless of noise, seizes chair and smashes S. door which now shows best flight will be S. toward Arkham, which is nearer than Newburyport. (Battering increases) Knocking increases and becomes a real battering. Hideous shouts—confused footsteps on stairs—renewed attempts to break door—(rattle of) inner door gives, but rattle of passkey in newly gained room.)

Guarding against noise, and shielded by noise of knocking, tries to force N. door (which opens outward) by pushing with shoulder. As

* As he talks with Zadok, the latter sees something in the sea which excites and alarms him vastly. He cries out and refuses to continue (perhaps before he tells anything) though narrator has seen nothing. Expresses fear for narrator. Tells him to get out of Innsmouth anyhow quickly as he can. Narrator is sceptical.

** Bus draws up from Newburyport, but man at curb speaks to driver. Driver then says unable to go farther. Broken machinery.

† Passkey tried, but bolt holds.

succeeds, noise heard and passkey sounds. Shoots bolt of second room, and starts forcing next side door but finds it was unlocked. Battering now at second outside door, and passkey sounds in third, but bolts in time—also bolting the door of third room. *Footprints* were seen in second room. Horrible. Takes down ring portiere and hooks to blind catch in sill—descends to slant roof of block. Streets are dark, but moving lights seen. Escape.

(As he descends, sees *thing* leaning out of window in flickering light. Ugh—Yog-Sothoth!) Doubtful?

Makes for S. part of town (most deserted). Catches glimpse of harbour* as he emerges—alive with swimmers under the moon. Hears hue and cry of chase—motor car—dodges back through suburbs and follows abandoned railway track to Rowley, which they don't suspect.

(Polish settlements on the south fringe have suddenly disappeared.)

Escapes—can't convince anybody—even though cautious about telling. Ring** to Prof. Derby of (Miskatonic) (cult authority).

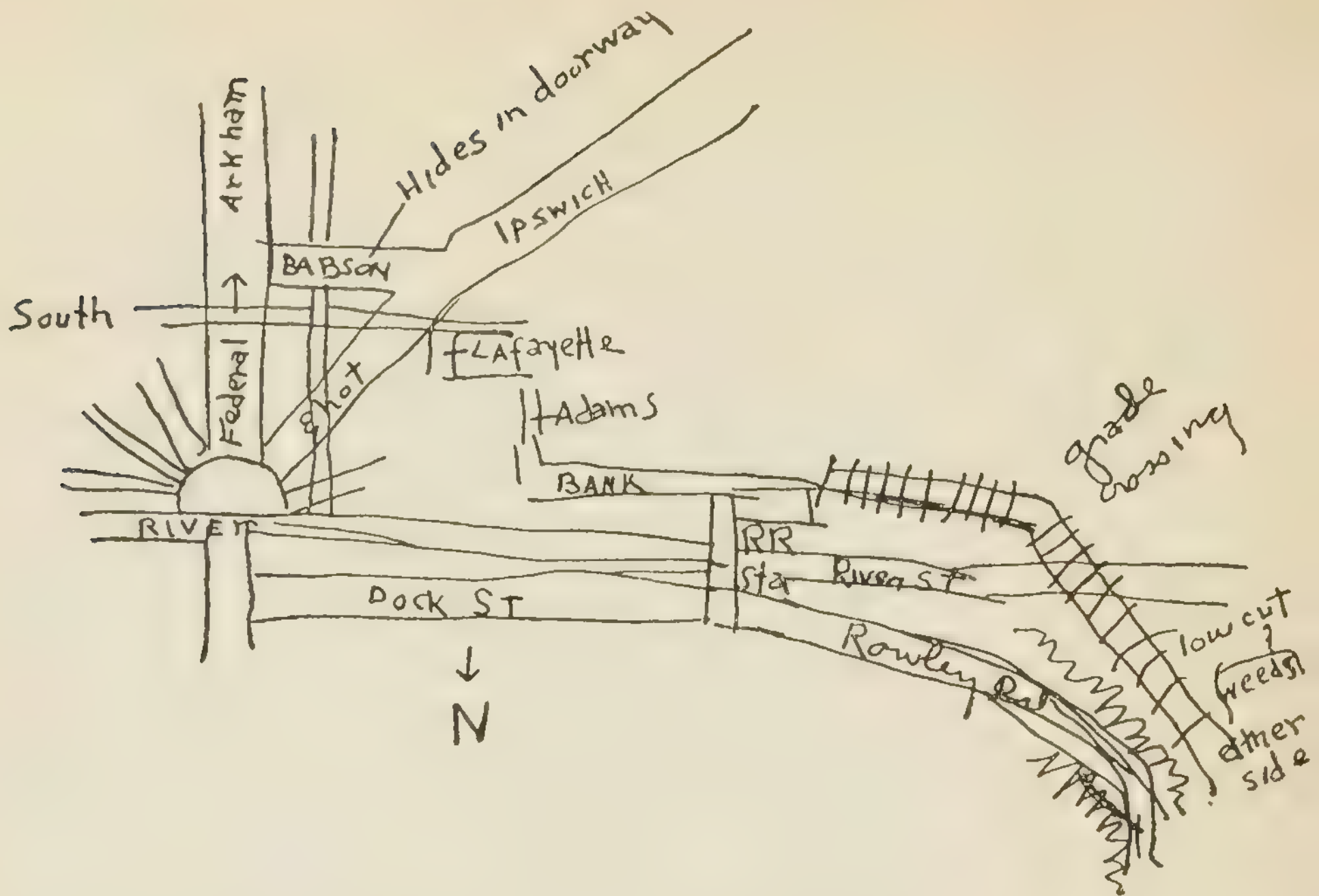
ESCAPE

Is started down Federal toward Arkham—hears pursuers. Decides to double back Babson /& try Ipswich Rd, but/ sees party following that. Rests in dark doorway till it is past—Decides to try abandoned railway to Rowley.

Edges through Lafayette, Bates, Adams and Bank to Abandoned Station. Follows tracks along Gorge bank and across almost decayed railway bridge, stumbles—hard going. Low Brush country. Sort of island in salt Marshland. Ry enters low open cut. Weeds and underbrush in ties interferes. Hears pursuers (returning?) stragglers joining main party swimmers along Rowley road—which he recalls from panorama /approaches track/ crosses track at mouth of cut and then diverges more to the South. Stops short, hides in bushes, & waits for pursuers to cross and go down diverging road. As they cross the track, he sees them in moonlight. . . .

* Down South St.

** Ring somewhat too large for any human finger except thumb.



Obed—gt. gt. grandfather b. 1798-1878 Innsmouth

Ft'thya-ly:—fish-thing—gt. gt. grandmother b. B. C. 78,000—returned to water after death of earthly husband.

Alice Marsh—gt. grandmother 1847-1867 Innsmouth. Aunt of Old Man Marsh—half-sister of his father. Dau. of /Capt. Marsh's son Onesiphorus & Thing/ m. Arkham man Joshua Orne 1840-1904.

Eliza Orne—grandmother. Only child (John Marsh Orne b. 1870—Suicide 1903 after 1st child died—Charles Peckham Orne b. 1873 disappeared 1914—Rebecca Orne b. 1875 m. 1900, 2 children odd 1 dead other queer bachelor) 1869-19 Arkham d. 1899 m. Cleveland man James Wmson

Mary Williamson—mother 1885-1922 Cleveland d. 1922 m. Henry Olmstead of Akron

Douglas Orne Williamson b. 1887 m. 1915 1 ch.b. 1917 queer

Walter Williamson—b. 1890 concealed 1900 in Canton sanitarium

Robert (Martin) Olmstead—Narrator—b. 1906—? Akron

Obed—1790—d. 1878
son—1830-1902
O M Marsh 1862—

/Capt. Obed Marsh
1. Obed Marsh 2.

Onesipherous Marsh—It

It—Ezekiel M. (1830) Alice
(1847)

b. 18 Dagon Marsh
|

Henry M.
Old Man.
b. 1862

Grandmother—only ch. of Alice Marsh—Eliza Orne
1864-1914
disappeared

James Williamson
1863-m. (2) Helen
Crane 1895—

Mary
1885-1922
strange
illness
|

Robt. Olm. narr.

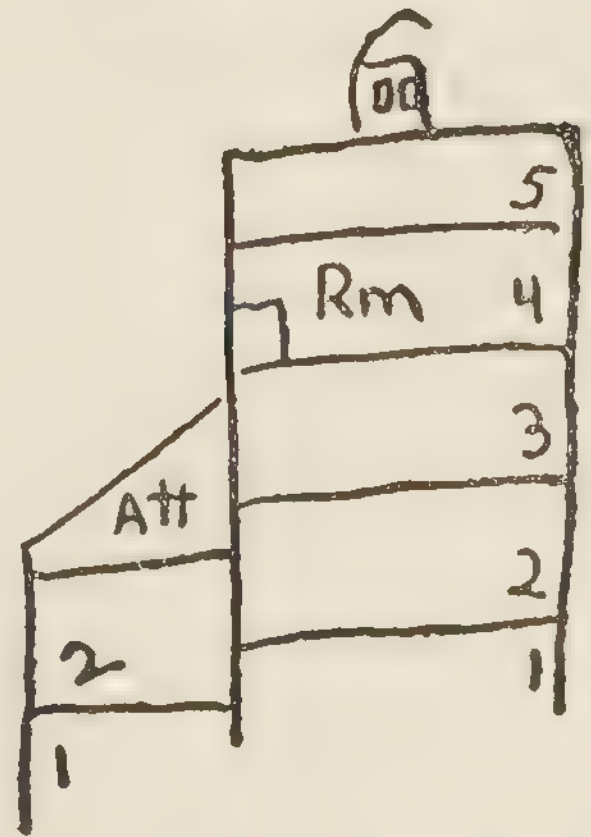
Douglas
1887—
suicide
in 1913

Walter
b. 1890—1915
getting odd
1 ch.b.1917
queer in sanit.

FINAL HORROR-EVIDENCE

- ? 1 - Record of madness and suicides in maternal line
- ? 2 - Picture of maternal uncle
- 3 - Jewellery belonging to maternal grandmother in storage
- ? 4 - Discovery of Marsh descent
- 5 - Own face in mirror

Gilham ho



DISCARDED DRAUGHT OF "THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH"

It was in the summer of 1927 that I suddenly cut short my sightseeing tour of New England and returned to Cleveland under a nervous strain. I have seldom mentioned the particulars of this trip, and hardly know why I do now except that a recent newspaper cutting has somehow relieved the tension which formerly existed. A sweeping fire, it appears, has wiped out most of the empty ancient houses along the deserted Innsmouth waterfront as well as a certain number of buildings farther inland; while a singularly simultaneous explosion, heard for many miles around, has destroyed to a vast depth the great black reef a mile and a half out from shore where the sea-bottom abruptly falls to form an incalculable abyss. For certain reasons, I take great satisfaction in these occurrences, even the first of which seems to me a blessing rather than a disaster. Especially am I glad that the old brick jewellery factory and the pillared Order of Dagon Hall have gone along with the rest. There is talk of incendiarism, and I suppose old Father Iwanich could tell much if he chose; but what I know gives a very unusual angle to my opinion.

I never heard of Innsmouth till the day before I saw it for the first and last time. It does not seem to be mentioned on any modern map, and I was planning to go directly from Newburyport to Arkham, and thence to Gloucester—if I could find transportation. I had no car, but was travelling by motor coach, train and trolley, always seeking the cheapest possible route. In Newburyport they told me that the steam train was the thing to take to Arkham; and it was only at the station ticket office, when I demurred at the high fare, that I heard about Innsmouth. The agent, whose speech showed him to be no local man, seemed sympathetic towards my efforts at economy, and made a suggestion that none of my other informants had offered.

"You could take that old bus, I suppose," he said with a certain hesitation, "but it isn't thought much of hereabouts. It goes through Innsmouth—you may have heard about that—and so the people don't like it. Run by an Innsmouth man—Joe Sargent—but never gets any custom from here, or from Arkham either, I guess. Wonder it keeps

running at all. I suppose it's cheap enough, but I never see more than two or three people in it—nobody but those Innsmouth folks. Leaves the Square—front of Hammond's Drug Store—at 10 A.M. and 7 P.M. unless they've changed lately. Looks like a terrible rattletrap—I've never been on it."

That was the first I ever heard of Innsmouth. Any reference to a town not listed in the guidebooks would have interested me, and the agent's odd manner of allusion provoked something like real curiosity. A town able to inspire such dislike in its neighbors, I thought, must be at least rather unusual, and worthy of a sightseer's attention. If it came before Arkham I would stop off there—and so I asked the agent to tell me something about it.

He was very deliberate, and spoke with an air of feeling somewhat superior to what he said.

"Innsmouth? Well, it's a queer kind of a town, down at the south of the Mawtuxet. It used to be almost a city—quite a seaport before the War of 1812—but the place has all gone to pieces in the last hundred years or so. There's no railroad—the Q & M never went through there, and the branch line from Rowley was given up years ago. More empty houses than there are people, I guess, and no business to speak of. Everybody trades either here or in Arkham or Ipswich. At one time they had quite a number of mills there, but nothing's left now but one jewellery factory.

"That's a pretty prominent proposition, though—all the travelling salesmen seem to know about it. Makes a special kind of fancy jewellery out of a secret alloy that nobody can analyse very well. They say it's platinum, silver, and gold,—but these people sell it so cheap that you can hardly believe it. Guess they have a corner on that kind of goods.

"Old man Marsh, who owns the thing, must be richer than Croesus. Queer old duck, though, and sticks pretty close around the town. He's the grandson of Capt. Obed Marsh, who founded the business. His mother was some kind of foreigner—they say a South Sea native—so everybody raised Cain when he married an Ipswich girl fifty years ago. They always do that about Innsmouth people. But his children and

grandchildren look just like anybody else so far as I can see. I've had 'em pointed out to me here. Never saw the old man.

"And why is everybody so down on Innsmouth? Well—you mustn't take too much stock in what people around here say. They're hard to get started, but once they do get started they never stop. They've been telling things about Innsmouth—whispering 'em, mostly—for the last hundred years, I guess, and I gather they're more scared than anything else. Some of the stories would make you laugh—about old Captain Marsh driving bargains with the devil and bringing imps out of hell to live in Innsmouth, or about some kind of devil-worship and awful sacrifices in some place near the wharves that people stumbled on around 1850 or thereabouts—but I come from Pauton, Vermont, and that kind of story doesn't go down with me.

"The real thing behind all this is simply race prejudice—and I don't say I'm blaming those that hold it. I hate those Innsmouth folks myself, and, wouldn't care to go to their town. I suppose you know—though I can see you're a Midwesterner by the way you talk—what a lot of our New England ships used to have to do with queer ports in Asia, Africa, the South Seas, and everywhere else, and what queer kinds of people they sometimes brought back with them. You've probably heard about the Salem man that came back with a Chinese wife, and maybe you know there's still a colony of Fiji Islanders somewhere around Cape Cod.

"Well, there must be something like that back of the Innsmouth people. The place was always badly cut off from the rest of the country by salt marshes and inlets, and we can't be sure about the ins and outs of the matter, but it's pretty plain that old Captain Marsh must have brought home some odd specimens when he had all three of his ships in commission back in the 1830's and 1840's. There certainly is a strange kind of streak in the Innsmouth folks today—I don't know how to express it, but it sort of makes me crawl. You'll notice it a little in Joe Sargent if you take his bus. Some of them have flat noses, big mouths, weak retreating chins, and a funny kind of rough grey skin. The sides of their necks are sort of shrivelled or creased up, and

they get bald very young. Nobody around here or in Arkham will have anything to do with them, and they act kind of offish themselves when they come to town. They used to ride on the railroad, walking and taking the train at Rowley or Ipswich, but now they use that bus.

"Yes, there's a hotel in Innsmouth—called the Gilman House—but I don't believe it can amount to much. I wouldn't advise you to try it. Better stay over here and take the ten o'clock bus tomorrow morning. Then you can get an evening bus there for Arkham at 8 o'clock. There was a factory inspector who stopped at the Gilman a couple of years ago, and he had a lot of unpleasant hints about the place. It seems they get a queer crowd there, for this fellow heard voices in other rooms that gave him shivers. It was foreign talk, but he said the bad thing about it was the kind of voice that sometimes spoke. It sounded so unnatural—slopping-like, he said—that he didn't dare go to sleep, just kept dressed and lit out early in the morning. The talk went on most of the night.

"This man—Caset, his name was—had a lot to say about the old Marsh factory, and what he said fitted in very well with some of the wild stories. The books were in no kind of shape, and the machinery looked old and almost abandoned, as if it hadn't been run a great deal. The place still used water power from the Lower Falls of the Mawtuxet. There were only a few employees, and they didn't seem to be doing much. It made me think, when he told me, about the local rumours that Marsh doesn't actually make the stuff he sells. Many people say he doesn't get enough factory supplies to be really running the place, and that he must be importing those queer ornaments from somewhere—heaven knows where. I don't believe that though. The Marshes have been selling those outlandish armlets and tiaras and things for nearly a hundred years; and if there were anywhere else where they got 'em, the general public would have found out all about it by this time. Then, too, there's no shipping or in-bound trucking around Innsmouth that would account for such imports. But it's a straight fact that all inspectors run up against queer things at the plant. Twenty odd years ago one of them disappeared at Innsmouth—never

heard of again—and I myself knew George Cole, who went insane down there one night, and had to be lugged away by two men from the Danvers asylum, where he is now. He talks of some kind of sound and shrieks things about 'scaly water-devils.'

"And that makes me think of another of the old stories—about the black reef off the coast. Devil's Reef, they call it. It's almost above water a good part of the time, but at that you could hardly call it a real island. The story is that there's a whole legion of devils seen sometimes on that reef—sprawled about, or darting in and out of some kind of caves near the top. It's a rugged, uneven thing, a good bit over a mile out, and sailors used to make great detours just to avoid it. One of the things they had against Captain Marsh was that he used to land on it sometimes when it was fairly dry. Probably the rock formation interested him, but there was talk about his having dealings with demons. That was before the big epidemic of 1846, when over half the people in Innsmouth were carried off. They never did quite figure out what the trouble was, but it was probably some foreign kind of disease brought from China or somewhere by the shipping.

"Maybe that plague took off the best blood in Innsmouth. Anyway, they're a doubtful lot now—and there can't be more than five hundred or six hundred of them. The rich Marshes are as bad as any. I guess they're all what people call 'white trash' down South—lawless and sly, and full of secret doings. Lobster fishermen, mostly—exporting by truck. Nobody can ever keep track of 'em, and state school officials and census people have a devil of a time. That's why I wouldn't go at night if I were you. I've never been there and have no wish to go, but I guess a daytime trip wouldn't hurt you—even though the people here will advise you not to take it. If you're just sightseeing, Innsmouth ought to be quite a place for you."

And so I spent that evening at the Newburyport Public Library looking up data about Innsmouth. When I had tried to question natives in the shops, the lunch room, and the fire station I had found them even harder to get started than the ticket agent had predicted, and

realised that I could not spare the time to overcome their first instinctive reticences. They had a kind of obscure suspiciousness. At the YMCA the clerk merely discouraged my going to such a dismal, decadent place, and the people at the library shewed much the same attitude, holding Innsmouth to be merely an exaggerated case of civic degeneration.

The Essex County histories on the shelves had very little to say, except that the town was founded in 1643, noted for shipbuilding before the Revolution, a seat of great marine prosperity in the early 19th century, and later on a minor factory centre, using the Mawtuxet as power. References to decline were very few, though the significance of the later records was unmistakable. After the Civil War all industrial life centred in the Marsh Refining Company at the Lower Falls, and the marketing of its products formed the only remaining bit of major commerce. There were very few foreigners; mostly Poles and Portuguese on the southern fringe of the town. Local finances were very bad, and but for the Marsh factory the place would have been bankrupt.

I saw a good many booklets and catalogues and advertising calendars of the Marsh Refining Company in the business department of the library, and began to realise what a striking thing that lone industry was. The jewels and ornaments it sold were of the finest possible artistry and the most extreme originality; so delicately wrought, indeed, that one could not doubt but that handicraft played a large part in at least the final stages of manufacture. Some of the half-tone pictures of them interested me profoundly, for the strangeness and beauty of the designs seemed to my eye indicative of a profound and exotic genius—a genius so spectacular and bizarre that one could not help wondering whence the inspiration had come. It was easy to credit the boast of one of the booklets that this jewellery was a favorite with persons of sophisticated taste, and that several specimens were exhibited in museums of modern craftsmanship.

Large pieces predominated—armlets, tiaras, and elaborate pendants—but rings and lesser items were numerous. The raised or incised designs—partly conventional and partly with a curious marine motif—were

wrought in a style of tremendous distinctiveness and of utter dissimilarity to the art traditions of any race or epoch I knew about. This other-worldly character was emphasised by the oddness of the precious alloy, whose general effect was suggested in several colour-plates. Something about these printed things fascinated me intensely—almost disproportionately—and I resolved to see as many original specimens as possible both at Innsmouth and in shops and museums elsewhere. Yet there was a distinct element of repulsion mixed with the fascination; proceeding, perhaps, from the evil and silly old legends about the founder of the business which the ticket-agent had told me.

* * *

The door of the Marsh retail office was open, and I walked in with considerable expectancy. The interior was shabby and ill-lighted, but contained a large number of display cases of solid and capable construction. A youngish man came forward to meet me, and as I studied his face a fresh wave of disturbance passed over me. He was not unhandsome, but there was something subtly bizarre and abhorrent about his features and vocal timbre. I could not stifle a keen sudden aversion, and acquired an unexplained reluctance to seem like any sort of curious investigator. Before I knew it I found myself telling the fellow that I was a jewellery buyer for a Cleveland firm, and preparing myself to shew a merely professional interest in what I should see.

It was hard, though, to carry out this policy. The clerk switched on more lights and began to lead me from case to case, but when I beheld the glittering marvels before me I could scarcely walk steadily or talk coherently. It took no excessive sensitiveness to beauty to make one literally gasp at the strange, alien loveliness of these opulent objects, and as I gazed fascinatedly I saw how little justice even the colour plates had done them. Even now I can hardly describe what I saw—though those who own such pieces or have seen them in shops and museums can supply the missing data. The massed effect of so many elaborate samples was what produced my especial feeling of awe and

unrest. For somehow or other, these singular grotesques and arabesques did not seem to be the product of any earthly handiwork—least of all of a factory only a stone's throw away. The patterns and trceries all hinted of remote spaces and unimaginable abysses, and the aquatic nature of the occasional pictorial items added to the general unearthliness. Some of the fabulous monsters filled me with an uncomfortable sense of dark pseudo-memory which I tried . . .

* * *

. . . The taint and blasphemy of furtive Innsmouth. He, like me, was a normal being outside the pall of decay and normally terrified by it. But because he was so inextricably close to the thing, he had been broken in a way that I was not yet broken.

Shaking off the hands of the fireman who sought to detain him, the ancient rose to his feet and greeted me as if I were an acquaintance. The grocery youth had told me where most of Uncle Zadok's liquor was obtained, and without a word I began leading him in that direction—through the Square and around into Eliot Street. My haste to leave Innsmouth had abated for the moment, and I felt instead a queer curiosity to dip into this gambling patriarch's chaotic store of extravagant myth. His step was astonishingly brisk for one of his age and bibulousness, and I marvelled at the original strength of his constitution.

When we had bought a quart of whiskey in the rear of a dismal variety store, I led Uncle Zadok along South Street to the utterly abandoned section of the waterfront, and still farther southward to a point where even the fishermen on the distant breakwater could not see us, where I knew we could talk undisturbed. For some reason or other, he seemed to dislike this arrangement—casting nervous glances out to sea in the direction of Devil Reef—but the lure of the whiskey was too strong for him to resist. After we had found a seat on the edge of a rotting wharf I gave him a pull at the bottle and waited for it to take effect. Naturally, I graduated the doses very carefully, for

I did not wish the old man's loquacity to turn into a stupor. As he grew more mellow, I began to venture into some remarks and inquiries about Innsmouth, and was really startled by the terrible and sincere portentousness of his lowered voice. He did not seem as crazy as his wild tales would indicate, and I found myself shuddering even when I could not believe his fantastic inventiveness. I hardly wondered at the naive credulity of superstitious Father Iwanich.

* * *

Notes

FOR *At the Mountains of Madness*

Find pass, artifacts (9 p.m.) soapstone or steatite-greenish (stones of diff. strat. shaped by water) (Point-cluster markings) 5-point (do not reveal nature) marking like an *Nec* symbol. Dogs uneasy. Come on thing (animal or vegetable?) 10 p.m. (not identified yet) Dogs frantic—thing is removed for inspection. (Compares with Cthulhu & others myth—myth of cosmic Thing in *Nec* which created earth life as joke—) (older than stalagmites) Come on cluster of 13 11 p.m. (many artifacts) Bring to surface (no more near) after leading dogs off. Transport to camp by man-drawn sledges leading dogs (all 3 sledges as used for apparatus) (14 bodies) . . . Newport description effect of sunlight odd—thawing-out motions. Dogs brought *near* camp for feeding convenience. Sullen. 12:30 a.m. Jan. 24. (Snow corral prepared meanwhile.) (Winds blow increasingly) Dissection attempted on perfect specimen—material tough—impossible problem how to cut material without violent means that would damage specimen. . . . (1:30 a.m.) Sawing on damaged specimens reveals *strange* leathery organs

(dry) (2 a.m.) in *remarkable* state of preservation. Type of tissue curiously non-deteriorative—Certain inner sacs reveal moist material—queer bad odour—nearby dogs *frantic* . . . Sap—not blood. Decide rest. Lake signs off. *Arkham* final for relaying. 2:30 a.m. Jan. 24. Narrator gives message (as head of Dep.) Congratulatory talk with Pabodie—his device unearthed Things. All rest 3 a.m. Very high wind. . . . Narrator requests transportation—told that wind is too high. Nobody thinks of resting or retiring. Buoyed up by excitement. . . .

Jany. 24. 11 a.m.—(violent gale of wind at S. Base) Narr. & Pabodie awakened by wireless clicking. Think it must be Lake excited, but is *Arkham*. They have tried in vain to get Lake (since he did not send message at appointed 10 a.m.) & cannot raise him. Efforts continue. (The horror occurred 8 a.m.) No wind at McMurdo but heavy at S. Base. All hands fancy gale at Lake's location interrupts radio thro' some static condition. Plane radio damaged? How when all 4 sets? (Fresh burst at noon with after effects 2 p.m.) Worry grows. Freq. calls to Lake. Wind at base abates. By 6 p.m. decide to investigate. Fifth plane at barrier cache ordered to S. Base. Arrives with Pilot & 2 sailors in night Jan. 24-5. Discussion & brief rest.

5 a.m. Jan. 25. Vain calls to Lake. Load plane with fuel, food, sledge, 7 dogs, 10 men, radio, &c. set out for Lake. (7:15 a.m.) Wind—snow 4½ hrs. (Puffballs of snow rolling.) See mts.—cave—note block effect—(Tragedy horror) Mirage of terrible & fantastic city in zenith. (11:25 a.m. Jan. 25) See dark blue table-land. Camp on lower foothills—planes—derrick off to right—descend to camp. Dog enclosure tumbled. . . . Everything windswept—5 or 6 m. from base of higher foothills. Dogs distracted. Landing—confusion & horror, cut bodies, all dogs & men rummaged provisions—salt, sugar, bacon, books, *stoves*, matches, fuel supply, & other unnamed staples missing. All 3 sledges gone, also tents, fur clothing found disordered & oddly slashed. Charts, books, notes & data missing. Simple camp tools gone, also navigation photo. Snow bloodstained in lee of remaining tents (2) *queer prints?* but all terrain windlashed. Effects on camp. No trail

away. 6 broad graves over 9 feet long. One opened. A Thing defective within. ugh!! Groups of dots in snow—suggest voice. Dogs frantic—attack. All machinery, aeroplanes, derricks curiously & specifically meddled with—beyond power of wind to harm. Utter mystery & horror. (Inf. someone went mad?) (Wind carried off seldeges?) (noon—4 p.m.) rest 4—midnight. Guarded radios to outside. Narrator & Sherman lighten plane & try flight over mts. Delay due to wind. 7—noon. Jan. 26. Hard ascent. Blocks, ramparts & caves noted. Crumpled strata. Curious disparity of blocks &c. Fly over mts. See hideous dead city on plateau 20,000 ft. high. (Is it such—or only fantastic despite formations?) Circle over. See wreck of sledge down a crevasse—foothills between. (Returning—see nearby . . .?—fallen off sledge—on high barren slope of mountain 30,000 ft. up—above snow line . . . 5 p.m. . . . amidst ramparts near mouth of cave. 6 p.m. back to camp & plan for foot climb of mts. Exploration—with dogs & all men—torches—arms. Rest 10 p.m.)—Part between () deleted.

Ring Penguin. 4 ft. 6 in. high—+4 ft. aircraft. wt. 60 lbs. Age of specimen made—Lake whimsically recall primal myth of Great Old Ones which had filtered down from the stars & concocted earthlife as a joke or mistake.

Latest version. Morning Jan. 26. Narr. & Danforth try flight over Mts. in lightened plane. Delay 7—noon due to wind. Hard ascent. Remark region. Blocks, ramparts, honeycombs & caves noted. Crumpled station. Curious disparity of blocks. Decide land passage would have been possible. See possible volcanism. Sugg. of orbit. Fly over cuts.—See hideous dead city imbedded in lake of glare ice—on plateau 20,000 feet high. Like mirage but less complete. A few towers project above ice, tops open revealing vast yawning holes down. Wind frees rest grotesquely refracted (from -?-) of snow. Look down through ice. Some erected inward. All windows shuttered as if to exclude water. Land on foothills, proceed to explore on foot. In one opening see top of line of projections that may be ladder tho' not well adapted to human feet & hands. What is this region? No ordinary glaciation. In-

habited valley flooded suddenly by bursting of glacier dam on mountains, or is this a lake formed after desertion of city? A few vast rifts. Descend—See marks of water presence on smooth stone walls. Connecting passages. Odd proportions. Whole city penetrable like labyrinth. Air good—except at rifts—current faintly warm—seems to rise from below. Rooms shew signs of deliberate desertion. To prevent loss of direction, tear up pocket notebook & scatter as in hare & hounds. Sea current not too strong to disturb. Work downward as far as possible across bridges & down steep & curious ribbed inclined planes or ramps corresponding to staircases. Many five-pointed rooms. Principle of arch known & used. Tilting here & there. Recesses of unknown purpose—Carved pylons where river hits barrier range. Everything on vast scale except small movables. Stone blocks of huge size—cracks from freezing—but massive blocks resist. Of various local rocks, none later than Comanchian. Newest rocks must be older than pleistocene suggests older arts carved from solid rock. A few inscriptions—groups of dates in cartouches—certain bas-reliefs of conventional art tradition shew various ancient animals *including the things*. Conclusion—wounds on beasts & soapstone artifacts due to inhabitants. No human beings (tho' certain degraded mammals suggest them). Presence of fishes & marine radiata in juxtaposition with buildings suggests enigma. Art indicates mature culture. Geometrical designs. Piping over mountains—designs like maps—Wegener cont. Cities on land & sea-bottom indifferently. Puffs of smoke? Finally no more byways down—rooms more spacious & decorated. Ground floor? Paper runs low. Piping sounds. Find well leading far down underground. Air warmer. Plan to descend later. (Sound far distant—clatter of mortal?) Explore more of gr. floor. See light shaft reaching clear to top—dizzy ht. In center of floor terrifying sight. Smashed sledges. Sound of hasty retreat. &—&c.—plane—cave—find area barriers—odour—remember that of buried disc. spec. Prepare to leave camp in morn. Sleep. Dream of piping music notes. Back to old S. base & on then to outside world.

Jany. 27—7 a.m. Prepare to start for mountain where tent was seen.

Off 8 a.m. Wind—snow—cold—slow going—up hill—reach really steep slopes 10:30. Tedious climb. Snow slopes—crevasses—In lee of mt. signs of confused track wind has spared. Ramparts & blocks—artificial effect. Cave mouth—fallen tent—effect of sculpture in jambs & lintel—groups of points Elder Sign—dogs refuse to enter. We leave them before entrance & go in with torches. . . . Sculptures—bas-reliefs—carve designs—wonder—passage goes on—sculptures—groups of dots (refer Ark artifacts—grave markings—lintel &c) up & down—shafts varying size & regularity—artificial circular chambers centre circular enclosure around shallow pit abt. 5 ft. diam. 3 ft. deep—History sculptured on circular walls—descent to earth—this planet, creation of terrestrial organic life as joke or accident. Subjugation of result—daily life—cold—with-draw to caves—farther & farther as cold creeps—later sculp. cruder—on—another chamber of shrines—Holy of Holies—in chair frame is body of one of the Things. . . . Charts—Math diagrams—Wegener's theory proved—Zimbabwe—in a vast knowledge . . . Slaves of *submarine* Things Helped build houses. (Land Thing used wings to raise blocks.) Pictures of Things hunting—animals of cretaceous & tertiary, & things at bottom of den. Marine city below (Eyeless Things stave off hideous giant luminous savagely intelligent protoplasm masses composed of plastic jet-black—reflective iridescent bubbles & capable of forming temporary organs adaptable to any medium—air, water, nether spawn of inner earth. Mimic piping voices. 15 ft. diameter as sphere, but viscous like Tsathoggua. Finally conquer Things & learn their language. . . . Odour—X & gasoline—find bodies &c. (Copied some designs & sculptures) find maps—groups of dots—proceed to N. tunnel. Find spiral ramp leading to outer air. On way *very ancient* (route of tunnel mouth. Sledges—eyeless albino penguins. Current of warmer air. Advance through. (Terrible strange sculptures) Vapours. (1/2 mile on) pile of curiously stacked furs & tent cloth. Large cavern (3/4 mile in) hellish sight—Old Ones killed—headless—black slime— . . . Piping sound like subway train (Groups of dots.) Flight up spiral & to plane—diff. in altitude—rise—Danf. screams at what he sees in sky—over mts.—Piping vapours? . . . End.

Party of 12

Lake +	Atwood*
#Gedney +	Orrendorf
Carroll +	Watkins #
#Moulton + &	Brennar # &
#Fowler +	Aiello
#Mills +	Boudrean #

Party of Seven

Prof. Byer*	*Professor
Pabodie*	+ Student
Allen	#Pilot
Danforth	& Wireless Op.
# & Williamson	The Students
McTighe	(Lake's Party)
& # Ropes +	Gedney
	Carroll
Relief Plane	Moulton
Sherman # &	Fowler
Gunnarsson	Mills
Larsen	

(Dyer's Party)

Danforth
Ropes

Qualified Pilots

Gedney	Sherman
Carroll	Danforth
Moulton	McTighe
Fowler	Ropes
Mills	
Brennan	
Watkins (non op)	
Boudrean (non op)	

Notes

For *The Shadow Out of Time*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ::: S. Latitude $22^{\circ} 3' 14''$::: E. Longitude $125^{\circ} 0' 39''$. In Great Sandy Desert. :::: (In climbing out Jars stares back) ::::: West & South of Warburton's path of 1873; East of Mt. Macpherson & Gregory's path of 1861. :::: 100 m. SE of Joanna Spring. N. of Dry Salt Lake & Amgas Range. S. of St. George Range, Fitzroy R. & Kimberly goldfield. East of De Grey R. & Pilbarra goldfield. :::: From Broome (on Roebuck Bay) to Joanna Spring—200 m.

Native legends of BUDDAI, a gigantic old man lying asleep for ages, with his head resting on his arm, which is deep in the sand. He is expected to awake some day and eat up the world.

Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee b. Haverhill 1871 son of Jonathan & Hannah (Wingate) Peaslee. :: att. Miskatonic U. 1889-1893. Harvard 1893-5. Instructor Pol. Econ. Miskatonic 1895-1898. M. Alice Keezar of Harvard 1896. Robert K. b. 1898. Wingate b. 1900. Hannah b. 1903. Assc. Prof. 1898-1902. Prof. 1902-1908. ::: Amnesia Thurs. May 14, 1908 (age 37) 1913 (age 42). Work on strange dreams & Amnesia—studies in psychology 1915 onward. Instr. Psych. Miskatonic 1922+ (age 51). Hear of Australian legends from Perth 1934. Visit Australia—June (equin. Dec.) 1935. Climax July 1935. Age 64. :: Leave camp 11:45; arr. opening 1:30; lv. opening 3:30; arr. camp 4:30. (Wind starts up abt. 3:30 a.m.) (Experience night of Jul. 16—Wed.-Thurs. July 17-18, 1935) :: (20 m. per hr. 200 a day.)

Poems

Phaeton

Critic, whose soul a busy world hath slain,
Whose taste is but the impress of the times,
Bid me no more my eager quill restrain,
Or court the multitude in earthly rhymes.

Say not again that passion, bliss, and woe,
The hackney'd feelings of the gen'ral heart,
Must fill my days, in all my visions glow,
And throb triumphant through my labour'd art.

Let the stout swain, whom no reflections wake,
Chant of his Phyllis, and his hopes and fears;
Let earth-bound clods of such tame things partake,
Dance with vain joy, and shed their trivial tears.

Why should I fret in microcosmic bonds
That chafe the spirit, and the mind repress,
When through the clouds gleam beckoning beyonds
Whose shining vistas mock man's littleness?

Can seeing intellect contented lie
Within the confines of our tiny race,
When overhead yawns wide the starry sky,
Pregnant with secrets of unfathom'd space?

August

Come, mellow month, whose full-blown charms
O'er mead and wood diffuse their grace;
Whose ardour all the valley warms,
And glads the grateful mountain's face.

The waving corn in yonder field,
Delighted, owns thy genial ray;
Whilst clover'd plains adoring yield
The frankincense of new-mown hay.

The sky a lovelier blue puts on;
The sun thro' Virgo proudly rides;
The lark sings sweeter at the dawn;
The stream with purer crystal glides.

The grove with tropic plenty flow'rs,
And Summer reigns in regal state;
Precious the boon of earlier hours,
Yet now doth each one culminate.

To youthful bards the Spring I give;
To sighing swains the June divine;
But I midst riper joys would live,
And choose the August days as mine!

Death

Think not that Death malignly waits,
A weapon of the hostile Fates,
To strike the sinner down;
'Tis but a link in Nature's plan
To join succeeding growths of man,
And life complete to crown.

All finite things unfailing tend
From a beginning to an end,
For what is Time but Change?
What goal of growth could Life possess,
If stretch'd out into emptiness,
With bleak unbounded range?

What bard with grace could ever sing
The cloying charm of endless Spring,
Or Praise eternal day?
Since man is tun'd to Time alone,
The wise in Death a friend must own,
And bow to Nature's way!

To the American Flag

(Written in 1918)

Starry folds, whose matchless splendour
Long hath bless'd our grateful eyes;
Gleaming with a light more tender
Than your rivals in the skys,
Wave, as always in a glory
None may tarnish or excel;
Keep upon our lips the story
That our fathers lov'd to tell!

May your grandeur be unceasing,
Proud reminder of the past,
As in noble rank increasing,
Each new ray outshines the last;
Yesterday for one young nation
You in valour were unfurl'd,
But today your constellation
Beams aloft for all the world!

To a Youth

(Dedicated to Master Alfred Galpin, Jun.)

Learned boy, upon whose brow
Sits the green Thessalian bay,
Heir to youthful joys that now
Bloom along the fragrant way;
Pluck thy garlands with a care
For the winter days ahead;
Laurels canst thou gaily wear
When the roses all are dead!

Dryads chase thy tripping feet,
Muses love thine eager eyes;
Keep thou as the Dryads sweet,
Grow thou as the Muses wise.
Beauties round thy pathway wind,
Virtues round thy forehead dart;
Sip the beauties for thy mind,
Clasp the virtues to thy heart!

Youth is but a swift caress,
Age is long and cold and drear;
Feast thy sight on loveliness
In the springtide of thy year.
Flow'rs and dreams beside thee lie,
Gather wisely what will last;
Flow'rs will wither bye and bye,
Dreams will keep for thee the past!

So adown the blossomy road
 Wander lightly, wander free;
 It will not again be trod,
 Gentle traveller, by thee.
 Joys are fleeting—mourn not deep—
 Mem'ries for the future store;
 Then, unfearing, sink to sleep,
 Blest and dreamless evermore!

My Favorite Character

About this season 'tis a smart proceeding
 In mild aesthetic groups and letter'd places
 To choose a fav'rite from one's daily reading,
 Explaining brightly one's selective basis;
 But sure, whate'er I say can only hurt me,
 For fac'd with such a test, my wits desert me!

I'm told that certain tastes are e'er in fashion—
 Safe, tame, and classic, e'en tho' somewhat shopworn;
 A choice thus order'd ne'er will be a rash one,
 Suiting those thoughts and standards on the top worn—
 Esmond, D. Copperfield, or Hiawatha,
 Or anything from some nice high-school author.

A few gay souls affect with scorn to question
 The proper pref'rences of milder mortals,
 And with much pride display a tough digestion
 For such spid'd themes as lurk behind lock'd portals:
 Jurgen, Clerk, Nicholas, Boccaccio's misses,
 And sundry things of Joyce's, from "Ulysses."

But if sincerity be not outmoded

In this degen'rate day of muddled meaning,
Much may be said for those whose hearts are loaded

With figures of a lowlier mood and leaning—
Boyhood's own idols, whom the sages hear not—
Frank Merriwell, Nick Carter, and Fred Fearnot!

Then, too, 'tis hard just now to dodge the moderns,

Our cubists, sharply to tomorrow dated;
Aesthetes of model 1930—odd ones

Whose palates with all thought and grace are sated:
Trust them to give some shapeless freak a trial,
From T. S. Eliot or last April's *Dial*!

Now as for me, I am no man of learning

To know just what I like and why I like it;
Letters and hist'ry set my poor head turning

Till not a choice can permanently strike it!
My fav'rite? Fie on printed information—
I'll frankly hand myself the nomination!

To Templeton and Mount Monadnock

In peace beneath the crystal summer skies,
Behold the spires of Templeton arise;
Around the green the grove-deck'd mead expands,
Whilst vary'd blossoms tint the smiling lands.
Pleas'd with the beauties of the blest domain,
No Goldsmith long could mourn sweet Auburn's plain;
The rural grace Old England lov'd to view,
Here blooms again, transplanted to the New!
The rip'ning corn along the furrow'd leas
Nods in the sun, and dances in the breeze;
In stately elm and stout-lim'd oak we trace
Th' enduring glories of New-England's race.
Can ancient bliss from such a scene depart,
Or dull decadence pain the pensive heart?
Can with'ring change ancestral shades o'er-ride,
And aliens live where sturdy Saxons died?
May fav'ring fate a kindly respite lend,
And keep this vale untainted to the end!
Look to the north, where Grand Monadnock's height
Enchains the fancy, and rewards the sight;
Such rock-ribb'd hills our own New-England gave
To mould her sons as rugged and as brave.
Ancient Monadnock! Silent, pine-girt hill,
Whose majesty could move a Whittier's quill;
Whose distant brow the humbler pen excites;
Whose purpled slope the raptur'd gaze invites;
Stand thou, Great Sentinel, though nations fall—
In thee New-England triumphs over all!

The House

'Tis a grove-circled dwelling
Set close to a hill,
Where the branches are telling
Strange legends of ill;
Over timbers so old
That they breathe of the dead,
Crawl the vines, green and cold,
By strange nourishment fed;
And no man knows the juices they suck
from the depths of their dank slimy bed.

In the gardens are growing
Tall blossoms and fair,
Each pallid bloom throwing
Perfume on the air;
But the afternoon sun
With its red slanting rays
Makes the picture loom dun
On the curious gaze,
And above the sweet scent of the blossoms
rise odours of numberless days.

The rank grasses are waving
On terrace and lawn,
Dim memories saving
Of things that have gone;
The stones of the walks
Are encrusted and wet,
And a strange spirit stalks
When the red sun has set.

And the soul of the watcher is fill'd
with faint pictures he fain would forget.

It was in the hot June-time
I stood by that scene
When the gold rays of noon-time
Beat bright on the green.
But I shiver'd with cold,
Groping feebly for light,
As a picture unroll'd—
And my age-spanning sight
Saw the time I had been there before
flash like fulgury out of the night.

The City

It was golden and splendid,
That City of light;
A vision suspended
In deeps of the night;
A region of wonder and glory, whose temples were marble
and white.

I remember the season
It dawn'd on my gaze;
The mad time of unreason,
The brain-numbing days
When Winter, white-sheeted and ghastly, stalks onward
to torture and craze.

More lovely than Zion
It shone in the sky
When the beams of Orion
Beclouded my eye,
Bringing sleep that was filled with dim mem'ries of
moments obscure and gone by.

Its mansions were stately,
With carvings made fair,
Each rising sedately
On terraces rare,
And the gardens were fragrant and bright with strange
miracles blossoming there.

The avenues lur'd me
With vistas sublime;
Tall arches assur'd me
That once on a time
I had wander'd in rapture beneath them, and bask'd in
the Halcyon clime.

On the plazas were standing
A sculptur'd array;
Long bearded, commanding,
Grave men in their day—
But one stood dismantled and broken, its bearded face
battered away.

In that city effulgent
No mortal I saw,
But my fancy, indulgent
To memory's law,
Linger'd long on the forms in the plazas, and eyed their
stone features with awe.

I fann'd the faint ember
 That glow'd in my mind,
 And strove to remember
 The aeons behind;
 To rove thro' infinity freely, and visit the past unconfin'd.

Then the horrible warning
 Upon my soul sped
 Like the ominous morning
 That rises in red,
 And in panic I flew from the knowledge of terrors
 forgotten and dead.

The Poe-et's Nightmare

A Fable

Luxus tumultus semper causa est.

Lucullus Languish, student of the skies,
 And connoisseur of rarebits and mince pies,
 A bard by choice, a grocer's clerk by trade,
 (Grown pessimist through honours long delay'd)
 A secret yearning bore, that he might shine
 In breathing numbers, and in song divine.
 Each day his fountain pen was wont to drop
 An ode or dirge or two about the shop,
 Yet naught could strike the chord within his heart
 That throb'd for poesy, and cry'd for art.
 Each eve he sought his bashful Muse to wake
 With overdoses of ice cream and cake,
 But though th' ambitious youth a dreamer grew,
 Th' Aonian Nymph declin'd to come to view.

Sometimes at dusk he scour'd the heav'ns afar
Searching for raptures in the evening star;
One night he strove to catch a tale untold
In crystal deeps—but only caught a cold.
So pin'd Lucullus with his lofty woe,
Till one drear day he bought a set of Poe:
Charm'd with the cheerful horrors there display'd,
He vow'd with gloom to woo the Heav'nly Maid.
Of Auber's Tarn and Yaanek's slope he dreams,
And weaves an hundred Ravens in his schemes.
Not far from our young hero's peaceful home,
Lies the fair grove wherein he loves to roam.
Though but a stunted copse in vacant lot,
He dubs it Temp-e, and adores the spot;
When shallow puddles dot the wooded plain,
And brim o'er muddy banks with muddy rain,
He calls them limpid lakes or poison pools,
(Depending on which bard his fancy rules.)
'Tis here he comes with Heliconian fire
On Sundays when he smites the Attic lyre;
And here one afternoon he brought his gloom,
Resolv'd to chant a poet's lay of doom.
Roget's Thesaurus, and a book of rhymes,
Provide the rungs whereon his spirit climbs:
With this grave retinue he trod the grove
And pray'd the Fauns he might a Poe-et prove.
But sad to tell, ere Pegasus flew high,
The not unrelish'd supper hour drew nigh;
Our tuneful swain th' imperious call attends,
And soon above the groaning table bends.
Though it were too prosaic to relate
Th' exact particulars of what he ate,
(Such long-drawn lists the hasty reader skips,
Like Homer's well-known catalogue of ships)

This much we swear: that as adjournment near'd,
A monstrous lot of cake had disappear'd!
Soon to his chamber the young bard repairs,
And courts soft Somnus with sweet Lydian airs;
Through open casement scans the star-strown deep,
And 'neath Orion's beams sinks off to sleep.

Now start from airy dell the elfin train
That dance each midnight o'er the sleeping plain,
To bless the just, or cast a warning spell
On those who dine not wisely, but too well.
First Deacon Smith they plague, whose nasal glow
Comes from what Holmes hath call'd "Elixir Pro";
Group'd round the couch his visage they deride,
Whilst through his dreams unnumber'd serpents glide.
Next troop the little folk into the room
Where snores our young Endymion, swath'd in gloom:
A smile lights up his boyish face, whilst he
Dreams of the moon—or what he ate at tea.
The chieftan elf th' unconscious youth surveys,
And on his form a strange enchantment lays:
Those lips, that lately trill'd with frosted cake,
Uneasy sounds in slumbrous fashion make;
At length their owner's fancies they rehearse,
And lisp this awesome Poe-em in blank verse:

* * *

*Aletheia Phrikodes**Omnia risus et omnia pulvis et omnia nihil.*

Demoniac clouds, up-pil'd in chasmy reach
Of soundless heav'n, smother'd the brooding night;
Nor came the wonted whisp'rings of the swamp,
Nor voice of autumn wind along the moor,
Nor mutter'd noises of th' insomnious grove
Whose black recesses never saw the sun.
Within that grove a hideous hollow lies,
Half bare of trees; a pool in centre lurks
That none dares sound; a tarn of murky face,
(Though naught can prove its hue, since light of day,
Affrighted, shuns the forest-shadow's banks.)
Hard by, a yawning hillside grotto breathes
From deeps unvisited, a dull, dank air
That sears the leaves on certain stunted trees
Which stand about, clawing the spectral gloom
With evil boughs. To this accursed dell
Come woodland creatures, seldom to depart:
Once I beheld, upon a crumbling stone
Set altar-like before the cave, a thing
I saw not clearly, yet from glimpsing, fled.
In this half-dusk I meditate alone
At many a weary noontide, when without
A world forgets me in its sun-blest mirth.
Here howl by night the werewolves, and the souls
Of those that knew me well in other days.
Yet on this night the grove spake not to me;
Nor spake the swamp, nor wind along the moor
Nor moan'd the wind about the lonely eaves
Of the bleak, haunted pile wherein I lay.
I was afraid to sleep, or quench the spark

Of the low-burning taper by my couch.
I was afraid when through the vaulted space
Of the old tow'r, the clock-ticks died away
Into a silence so profound and chill
That my teeth chatter'd—giving yet no sound.
Then flicker'd low the light, and all dissolv'd
Leaving me floating in the hellish grasp
Of body'd blackness, from whose beating wings
Came ghoulish blasts of charnel-scented mist.
Things vague, unseen, unfashion'd, and unnam'd
Jostled each other in the seething void
That gap'd, chaotic, downward to a sea
Of speechless horror, foul with writhing thoughts.
All this I felt, and felt the mocking eyes
Of the curs's universe upon my soul;
Yet naught I saw nor heard, till flash'd a beam
Of lurid lustre through the rotting heav'ns,
Playing on scenes I labour'd not to see.
Methought the nameless tarn, alight at last,
Reflected shapes, and more reveal'd within
Those shocking depths that ne'er were seen before;
Methought from out the cave a demon train,
Grinning and smirking, reel'd in fiendish rout;
Bearing within their reeking paws a load
Of carrion viands for an impious feast.
Methought the stunted trees with hungry arms
Grop'd greedily for things I dare not name;
The while a stifling, wraith-like noisomeness
Fill'd all the dale, and spoke a larger life
Of uncorporeal hideousness awake
In the half-sentient wholeness of the spot.
Now glow'd the ground, and tarn, and cave, and trees,
And moving forms, and things not spoken of,

With such a phosphorescence as men glimpse
In the putrescent thickets of the swamp
Where logs decaying lie, and rankness reigns.
Methought a fire-mist drap'd with lucent fold
The well-remember'd features of the grove,
Whilst whirling ether bore in eddying streams
The hot, unfinish'd stuff of nascent worlds
Hither and thither through infinity
Of light and darkness, strangely intermix'd;
Wherein all entity had consciousness,
Without th' accustom'd outward shape of life.
Of these swift circling currents was my soul,
Free from the flesh, a true constituent part;
Nor felt I less myself, for want of form.
Then clear'd the mist, and o'er a star-strown scene
Divine and measureless, I gaz'd in awe.
Alone in space, I view'd a feeble fleck
Of silvern light, marking the narrow ken
Which mortals call the boundless universe.
On ev'ry side, each as a tiny star,
Shone more creations, vaster than our own,
And teeming with unnumber'd forms of life;
Though we as life would recognize it not,
Being bound to earthy thoughts of human mould.
As on a moonless night the Milky Way
In solid sheen displays its countless orbs
To weak terrestrial eyes, each orb a sun;
So beam'd the prospect on my wond'ring soul;
A spangled curtain, rich with twinkling gems,
Yet each a mighty universe of suns.
But as I gaz'd, I sens'd a spirit voice
In speech didactic, though no voice it was,
Save as it carried thought. It bade me mark
That all the universes in my view

Form'd but an atom in infinity;
Whose reaches pass the ether-laden realms
Of heat and light, extending to far fields
Where flourish worlds invisible and vague,
Fill'd with strange wisdom and uncanny life,
And yet beyond; to myriad spheres of light,
To spheres of darkness, to abysmal voids
That know the pulses of disorder'd force.
Big with these musings, I survey'd the surge
Of boundless being, yet I us'd not eyes,
For spirit leans not on the props of sense.
The docent presence swell'd my strength of soul;
All things I knew, but knew with mind alone.
Time's endless vista spread before my thought
With its vast pageant of unceasing change
And sempiternal strife of force and will;
I saw the ages flow in stately stream
Past rise and fall of universe and life;
I saw the birth of suns and worlds, their death,
Their transmutation into limpid flame,
Their second birth and second death, their course
Perpetual through the aeons' termless flight,
Never the same, yet born again to serve
The varying purpose of omnipotence.
And whilst I watch'd, I knew each second's space
Was greater than the lifetime of our world.
Then turn'd my musings to that speck of dust
Whereon my form corporeal took its rise;
That speck, born but a second, which must die
In one brief second more; that fragile earth;
That crude experiment; that cosmic sport
Which holds our proud, aspiring race of mites
And moral vermin; those presuming mites
Whom ignorance with empty pomp adorns,

And misinstructs in specious dignity;
Those mites who, reas'ning outward, vaunt themselves
As the chief work of Nature, and enjoy
In fatuous fancy the particular care
Of all her mystic, super-regnant pow'r.
And as I strove to vision the sad sphere
Which lurk'd, lost in ethereal vortices;
Methought my soul, tun'd to the infinite,
Refus'd to glimpse that poor atomic blight;
That misbegotten accident of space;
That globe of insignificance, whereon
(My guide celestial told me) dwells no part
Of empyreal virtue, but where breed
The coarse corruptions of divine disease;
The fest'ring ailments of infinity;
The morbid matter by itself call'd man:
Such matter (said my guide) as oft breaks forth
On broad Creation's fabric, to annoy
For a brief instant, ere assuaging death
Heal up the malady its birth provok'd.
Sicken'd, I turn'd my heavy thoughts away.
Then spake th' ethereal guide with mocking mien,
Upbraiding me for searching after Truth;
Visiting on my mind the searing scorn
Of mind superior; laughing at the woe
Which rent the vital essence of my soul.
Methought he brought remembrance of the time
When from my fellows to the grove I stray'd,
In solitude and dusk to meditate
On things forbidden, and to pierce the veil
Of seeming good and seeming beauteousness

That covers o'er the tragedy of Truth,
Helping mankind forget his sorry lot,
And raising Hope where Truth would crush it down.
He spake, and as he ceas'd, methought the flames
Of fuming Heav'n revolv'd in torments dire;
Whirling in maelstroms of rebellious might,
Yet ever bound by laws I fathom'd not.
Cycles and epicycles of such girth
That each a cosmos seem'd, dazzled my gaze
Till all a wild phantasmal glow became.
Now burst athwart the fulgent formlessness
A rift of purer sheen, a sight supernal,
Broader than all the void conceiv'd by man,
Yet narrow here. A glimpse of heav'ns beyond;
Of weird creations so remote and great
That ev'n my guide assum'd a tone of awe.
Borne on the wings of stark immensity,
A touch of rhythm celestial reach'd my soul;
Thrilling me more with horror than with joy.
Again the spirit mock'd my human pangs,
And deep revil'd me for presumptuous thoughts;
Yet changing now his mien, he bade me scan
The wid'ning rift that clave the walls of space;
He bade me search it for the ultimate;
He bade me find the truth I sought so long;
He bade me brave th' unutterable Thing,
The final Truth of moving entity.
All this he bade and offer'd—but my soul,
Clinging to life, fled without aim or knowledge,
Shrieking in silence through the gibbering deeps.

* * *

Thus shriek'd the young Lucullus, as he fled
Through gibbering deeps—and tumbled out of bed;
Within the room the morning sunshine gleams,
Whilst the poor youth recalls his troubled dreams.
He feels his aching limbs, whose woeful pain
Informs his soul his body lives again,
And thanks his stars—or cosmoses—or such—
That he survives the noxious nightmare's clutch.
Thrill'd with the music of th' eternal spheres,
(Or is it the alarm-clock that he hears?)
He vows to all the Pantheon, high and low,
No more to feed on cake, or pie, or Poe.
And now his gloomy spirits seem to rise,
As he the world beholds with clearer eyes;
The cup he thought too full of dregs to quaff,
Affords him wine enough to raise a laugh.
(All this is metaphor—you must not think
Our late Endymion prone to stronger drink!)
With brighter visage and with lighter heart,
He turns his fancies to the grocer's mart;
And strange to say, at last he seems to find
His daily duties worthy of his mind.
Since Truth prov'd such a high and dang'rous goal,
Our bard seeks one less trying to his soul;
With deep-drawn breath he flouts his dreary woes,
And a good clerk from a bad poet grows!
Now close attend my lay, ye scribbling crew
That bay the moon in numbers strange and new;
That madly for the spark celestial bawl
In metres short or long, or none at all;
Curb your rash force, in numbers or at tea,
Nor over-zealous for high fancies be;
Reflect, ere ye the draught Pierian take,
What worthy clerks or plumbers ye might make;

Wax not too frenzied in the leaping line
That neither sense nor measure can confine,
Lest ye, like young Lucullus Languish, groan
Beneath Poe-etic nightmares of your own!

Sir Thomas Tryout

(Died Nov. 15, 1921)

To the venerable cat of a quaint gentle-
man in His Majesty's Province of y^e
Massachusetts-Bay, who publishes an
amateur magazine call'd *The Tryout*.

The autumn hearth is strangely cold
Despite the leaping flame,
And all the cheer that shone of old
Seems lessen'd, dull'd, and tame.

For on the rug where lately doz'd
A small and furry form,
An empty space is now disclos'd,
That no mere blaze can warm.

The frosty plain and woodland walk
In equal sadness sigh
For one who may no longer stalk
With sylvan hunter's eye.

And if as olden Grecians tell,
Amidst the thickest deep
A host of fauns and dryads dwell,
I know that they must weep.

Must weep when autumn twilight brings
Its mem'ries quaint to view,
Of all the little playful things
That TOM was wont to do.

So tho' the busy world may pass
With ne'er a tearful sign
The tiny mound of struggling grass
Beneath the garden vine,

There's many an eye that fills tonight,
And many a pensive strain
That sounds for him who stole from sight
In the November rain.

No sage can trace his soul's advance,
Or say it lives at all,
For Death against our curious glance
Has rear'd a mighty wall.

Yet tender Fancy fain would stray
To fair Hesperian bow'rs,
Where TOM may always purr and play
Amidst the sun and flow'rs.

Lament for the Vanished Spider

Dear humble friend in labour and in play,
Say to what region thou has fled away!
Week after week thy busy life was spent
Within these classic walls in calm content.
Thy noble patience, like the Muse's beams,
Inspir'd my efforts, and adorn'd my themes;
Till I had grown to hold thee as a guide,
To all my hopes and ventures close ally'd
How well my thoughts thy talents could engage!
How shone thy magic on the Tryout's page!
Tho' calm thy manner, and thy speeches brief,
Well might I call thee Editor-in-Chief!
Shall any say thy place was slight or low,
Or doubt the lustre of thy heav'nly glow?
Let such consider with observant eye
The annals of the myriad years gone by.
A spider 'twas that rescu'd Islam's head
When from the foe within a cave he fled;
Nor can proud Scotia venture to despise
The lowly beast that help'd her monarch rise.
Ev'n the curs'd Hun must speak with bated breath
Of him who sav'd old Frederick from death;
In short, we find the spider thron'd in state;
Friend of the Nine, and guardian of the great!
But thou, tried comrade of my busy hours—
Whither has crept with all thy magic pow'rs?
Hath some strange vision of thy spider-brain
Mov'd thee to quit our sordid sphere of pain?
Warm was thy home, and well-arrang'd thy lair;
Thy meat and drink supply'd with tender care;
Were juicy flies too few and far between,
Or was aught lacking in the kerosene?

Sadly I view thy vacant dwelling-place—
Thou transient trav'ler of an ancient race!
Would that I might, with Fancy's curious pow'r
Trace thy meanderings to thy hidden bow'r;
Mark ev'ry secret step, and see thee stand
A sceptred potentate of spider-land!
What wonders unsuspected may exist
In those far provinces of web and mist!
Gossamer castles with their moats of dew;
And fairy palaces too small to view;
Or is thine Empire of a darker kind—
Some bury'd spot the world hath left behind?
Own'st thou some temple, where thy strands embrace
The crumbling substance of a Pharaoh's face,
Or some black crypt beneath the shifting sand
Where a forgotten city us'd to stand?
In Tyre and Carthage, Babylon and Ur,
Luxor and Karnak, do thy legions stir;
For thee and such as thou the world was made—
Thy reign commences when our own's decay'd.
Down immemorial steps, to man unknown,
Thy spinning tribes drape many a gilded throne;
Ram-headed gods; objects too dark to name,
Altars that bore of old an impious flame,
Wing'd shadowy lions wrought of rock and brass,
And all the treasures despots can amass—
These thy dominions, vanish'd wand'ring one
Who lately bask'd 'neath Haverhill's bright sun!
But whilst I mourn, or thro' my fancy grope,
Within my heart bestirs a thrill of hope:
For bounteous Pan, who rules the vernal wold
Can oft restore the blessings lost of old:
Content I'll wait, and trust that he will bring
My faithful spider with returning Spring!

Regnar Lodbrug's Epicedium

(An 8th Century Funeral Song. . . .
Translated from Olaus Wormius)

With our swords have we contended!
Come but new to Gothland's shore
For the killing of the serpent
We have gain'd from Thor ()
()
From this deed they call me man
Because I have transfix'd the adder:
Shaggy Breeches from that slaughter.
()
I have thrust a spear into the serpent
With metal brighter ()

With our swords have we contended!
But a youth was I when eastward
In the channel of Oreon
With our foeman's gore in torrents
We the () and wolves delighted;
And the yellow-footed buzzard.
There the harden'd steel resounded
On the high-wrought hostile helmets.
One vast wound was all the ocean
And the hungry raven waded
Searching for its carrion food)
Deep in dead men's thick'ning blood.)

With our swords have we contended!
Ere two score of years we counted
High we bore our glist'ning lances
Wide we heard our fame and praises.

In the east before the harbour
 (Barons eight we overcame;)
 We the rav'ning eagle glutted;
 Dripping wounds fill'd up the ocean.
 Weary of the hopeless fray,)
 All the host dissolved away)

With our swords have we contended!
 When the Vistula we enter'd
 With our ships in battle order
 We unto the hall of Woden
 Sent the bold Helsingian foemen.
 Then the sword-points bit in fury;
 All the billows turn'd to life-blood
 Earth with streaming gore was crimson'd;
 Reeking sword with ringing note)
 Shields divided; armour smote.)

(With our swords have we contended!)
 (None had fallen on that day)
 (Till on his ship Heraclus fell:)
 (Than him before no braver baron)
 Cleft the sea with ships of battle;
 Never after him was chieftain
 Lighter hearted in the fighting.

With our swords have we contended!
 Now the host flung down their buckles;
 Flying spears tore hero's bosoms
 Swords on Scarfian rocks were striking.
 Gory was his shield in slaughter
 Till the royal Rofus perish'd.
 Sweat from weary hands and pale)
 Trickled down the suits of mail.)

With our swords have we contended!
Copious booty had the ravens
Round about the Indirian islands,
In that single day of action
(One in many deaths was little.)
(The rising sun grew bright on spears)
In the forms of prostrate warrior-men.
Arrows from their bows ejected;
(Weapons roared on Lano's plain.)
(Long the virgin mourned that slaughter.)

A Memoir of Lovecraft

By RHEINHART KLEINER

IT IS POSSIBLE that I met Lovecraft a little sooner—in 1916, or so—than some who, making his acquaintance later, did much more to improve the resultant opportunities for correspondence and personal friendship. My meeting with him was not due to any planning of my own, although I had been receiving letters for more than a year. I happened to be one of a party of Blue Pencillers on the way to Boston for a National Amateur Press Association convention, and Providence was the place where we changed from the boat to the train. One of our group telephoned him, and he appeared to greet us at the station. He was still somewhat young in looks then, and, as I thought, of a very prepossessing appearance. What struck me was his extreme formality of manner, and the highly complimentary style of his approach to those with whom he had had previous epistolary contact.

The following year I went to Providence for the express purpose of spending a day or two with him. I was greeted at the door of 598 Angell Street by his mother, who was a woman just a little below medium height, with graying hair, and eyes which seemed to be the chief point of resemblance between herself and her son. She was very cordial and even vivacious, and in another moment had ushered me into Lovecraft's room. In those days he had not yet overcome a certain tenseness of manner, which a stranger might have taken, in some of its manifestations, as a desire for argument. If it became at all obtrusive—and I do not say it did—it showed itself in an insistence upon facts which his hearer did not question, and sometimes even in an "asperous" contradiction! Lovecraft, however, was much too carefully self-schooled in the correct eighteenth century code of conduct to be really guilty of any crudities of this sort, and we shortly got along very well together.

I noticed that at every hour or so his mother appeared in the doorway with a glass of milk, and Lovecraft forthwith drank it. Something was said about a cup of tea for me, but by that time I had become aware of the heat of the room and thought it might be a good idea to suggest that we take a short walk. I digress sufficiently to say that the room in which I sat was fairly small and lined around three sides with books, mostly old ones. On the wall near his desk were small pictures of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and one or two others. An almanac hung against the wall directly over his desk; it was a *Farmer's Almanac* with which he had been familiar for many years.

Just before broaching the subject of an outdoor stroll, I absentmindedly took my pipe out of my pocket. I don't know why, but I suddenly felt that pipe-smoking in that house might not be quite the thing, and put it back into my pocket. At that very moment his mother appeared in the doorway again and espied the pipe sliding back into my pocket. To my surprise, she gave an exclamation of pleasure and wished that I could persuade Howard to smoke a pipe, as it would be "so soothing" for him. This may have been New England courtesy to cover a guest's embarrassment, but I knew that I never made the slightest attempt to convert Lovecraft to pipe-smoking!

We found ourselves outside very shortly, and Lovecraft suggested certain favorite buildings and localities which I might care to see. They were survivals of that more spacious century in which his mental home seemed to be, but I should have difficulty in finding them today. On our way back to his home, and while we were still downtown, I suggested stopping in at a cafeteria for a cup of coffee. He agreed, but took milk himself, and watched me dispose of coffee and cake, or possibly pie, with some curiosity. It occurred to me later that this visit to a public eating-house—a most unpretentious one—might have been a distinct departure from his own usual habits.

At this date—in 1917—Lovecraft, the friend and companion of all genial and well-intentioned literary men, was still in embryo. During his New York period of the early 1920's, he ate and drank like other men, and coffee never came amiss to him. He never touched liquor or tobacco,

but he had company in our own group who shared this abstinence with him. He could sit with friends who drank beer or whiskey, and who smoked cigars, cigarettes or pipes, without being troubled in any way.

On the following day, Lovecraft came to my hotel and we set out on a tour of the second-hand book shops. I wish I could recall some cogent observation or shrewd quip in this connection, if Lovecraft made any; but I think we were both too dignified at that time to unbend and be quite natural with each other. It was on later visits that I met his aunts, Mrs. Lillian Clark and Mrs. Annie E. P. Gamwell. I thought both of them very gracious ladies, but other details of those visits have quite left my memory.

It has always seemed to me that Lovecraft's fundamental instincts were entirely normal. Removed from the repressive sickroom atmosphere of his home and the attendance of his mother or his aunts, he blossomed out astonishingly. Furthermore, he had a real knack for making himself well-liked. W. Paul Cook attributed Lovecraft's final development to his sojourn among the amateur journalists of the metropolis, and I am willing to believe it—albeit even Cook was aware that the progress of that development was not entirely painless!

Winfield T. Scott, in his excellent article in *Marginalia*, says that Lovecraft did not sleep away from his home until after his thirtieth birthday, and he is probably right. But it was certainly very early in the course of our friendship that he came to the Broadway Central Hotel in New York for an amateur press association convention, and that he and I shared the same bed for one night. I know that neither he nor I paid for the room; so I suspect that we must have used one of the rooms in George Julian Houtain's suite—especially rented by him for the use of convention guests. The point I wish to make has to do with Lovecraft's sleeping habit, which consisted of a long night-shirt, reaching almost to his ankles. I believe this article of apparel had long been relegated by modern folk to the attic, even at that time, but its use by Lovecraft certainly indicated his love of the old and the orthodox. Lovecraft had already grown on me considerably by that time, and his frequent letters were received more gladly and read more carefully than the daily newspaper at my door.

It was at a Boston convention of the National Amateur Press Association in the early 1920's, on the deck of a harbor boat which was to take us to some neighboring beach, that I introduced Lovecraft to his future wife, Mrs. Sonia Greene. She, somewhat in the spirit of George Moore's *Euphorion in Texas*, decided to fall in love with him and marry him. On our return to Brooklyn, she sought out all those who were friends of Lovecraft—myself among them—and spent most of the time talking about him. I have no intention of dwelling unduly on this matter, but I do remember very well that it was while riding in a taxi with Mr. and Mrs. Houtain later that the news of the Lovecraft-Greene marriage was imparted to me. At once, I had a feeling of faintness at the pit of my stomach and became very pale. Houtain laughed uproariously at the effect of his announcement, but agreed that he felt as I did.

Sonia Greene was a very attractive woman of Junoesque proportions; the women of the Boston circle professed to be bored by her, but she was morally an absolute puritan. Her standards of conduct were not only severe, but they were often, at least for men, somewhat naive. I remember her once remarking with finality to a circle of Lovecraft's friends gathered at her home that no gentleman ever carried a pocket-knife. Forthwith, Lovecraft, Long, Kirk, Loveman and I produced ours. There was a general feeling that the marriage was not destined to last, nor did it.

As an example of the favorable impression Lovecraft could make upon strangers, I recall that he had one of his stories to type at one time, but his machine was still in Providence. Passing a printer's shop on Flatbush Avenue, he saw an unused typewriter on a table inside, and entered to ask whether he could use it. The printer not only gave him permission, but told him to come whenever he liked. Lovecraft's own generosity doubtless often inspired generosity in turn. I remember especially his generosity with books; he would lend any volume to almost anybody. The special feeling for a book as an entity, as a thing of beautiful type, artistic illustrations, and appropriate binding did not seem to be part of him. He probably admired all these details, but the printed word that was thus sumptuously presented was the main consideration with him. Even in the case of favorite authors, he showed much the same lack of interest in the book as a book. After all, a book could always be replaced! One of

his acquaintances in the Flatbush period was a light versifier named La Touche Hancock. He appeared regularly in magazines of the *Puck* and *Judge* variety. To La Touche, whose home address was never very clearly known, Lovecraft entrusted certain volumes to be read and returned; but Hancock died suddenly, and the recovery of the books was doubtful. If, indeed, they were ever restored to Lovecraft, I do not know.

In those days, Lovecraft and Long frequently browsed among the outside stalls of second-hand book shops. Sometimes Lovecraft thought of a friend in connection with some particular book which came to his hand, and if it cost no more than fifteen cents or a quarter, he would buy it for presentation purposes. He was kind enough to think of me in that way when, one day, he found a worn copy of Margaret of Navarre's *Heptameron*. It was minus the covers, and lacked about thirty pages at the end, but the price was but fifteen cents. What could be more appropriate to the known proclivities of a certain Brooklyn rhymester than a copy of this very book? It was purchased and duly presented to me, with a delightful eighteenth century inscription in Lovecraft's hand on the fly-leaf. That may have been almost a quarter century ago, and the library I possessed in those days has long since vanished, but I am prepared to show that shabby copy of the *Heptameron* to anyone interested in seeing it.

Lovecraft and I sometimes walked across the Manhattan Bridge, the view of the skyscrapers from various parts of the foot-walk being part of my artistic efforts in the letters I had written him. To me, these views were scenes in a drama which awaited only the right author to find proper appreciation. To Lovecraft, what he beheld here had secret links with some dream of mysterious fantasy or horror of which I had no inkling at the time. One night he relapsed into a benign eighteenth-century mood, as we were taking this walk, and suggested that we compose impromptu couplets about what we saw. I remember that his own efforts strongly reflected the influence of the "decent church that topped the neighboring hill" school, while my own were probably feeble imitations of the same thing.

Apropos *Something About Cats*, which was originally written by

Lovecraft under the title of *Cats vs. Dogs* for a meeting of the Blue Pencil Club, the subject having been assigned to him by the director—probably not unwillingly accepted, considering his great love for cats—I remember that Lovecraft wrote it with great pleasure; the subject grew and expanded under his hand, historical literary allusions beyond number suggested themselves, and it was not finished in time for the meeting at which it was to have been read.

And writing of cats, I am reminded of Lovecraft's appreciation of humor in others, whether that humor was intentional or not. One night, after hours, he and I were sitting in George Kirk's Chelsea Book shop, discussing the word "parallelopipedon." Lovecraft, as usual, was primed with information, but what I could have had to say on the subject quite baffles me, for I certainly could not say anything on it today! At any rate, it suddenly occurred to me that "parallelopipedon" would be quite a name for a cat, a pleasing fancy which I mentioned to him. Then, catching sight of the usual kitten playing around his chair, I stooped and began to pet it, murmuring soothingly, "Here, my little parallelopipedon." Glancing up at Lovecraft, I beheld him in a state of helpless mirth, his face contorted and his body shaking all over; he was so completely convulsed that it took him some time to return to normal!

Lovecraft had, too, a very real interest in the welfare of friends. Samuel Loveman at one time had been looking for a new room on Columbia Heights, but in a rather more expensive part of that thoroughfare. He finally located quite a desirable room with the usual magnificent view of the downtown Manhattan skyscrapers on the other side of the river. The landlady, however, became unexpectedly capricious and did not seem able to make up her mind to part with the room. Loveman mentioned his dilemma at the Kalem Club one night, and awakened Lovecraft's sympathetic interest. With his aunt, Mrs. Gamwell, who was in New York at that time, Lovecraft found opportunity to call upon the recalcitrant landlady, a formidable guarantee of anyone's desirability as a tenant! Loveman received such a high rating that the room became his without further question.

Long walks or nocturnal prowls were always a part of Lovecraft's plan

of life, and the hours of darkness were probably his preferred time for such ramblings. It is well known that Thomas de Quincey and Charles Dickens were notable night-prowlers, and I would place the name of H. P. Lovecraft well near the top of any list of such kindred spirits. In Greenwich Village, for whose eccentric habitants he had little use, he was fond of poking about in back alleys where his companions preferred not to go. In prohibition years, with murderous affrays among bootleggers and rum-runners likely to break out anywhere, this was a particularly dangerous business. Every other house in this neighborhood was open to suspicion as a speakeasy. I recall that at least once, while stumbling around among old barrels and crates in some dark corner of this area, Lovecraft found a doorway suddenly illuminated and an excited foreigner, wearing the apron that was an almost infallible sign of a speakeasy bartender, enquiring hotly what he wanted. Loveman and Kirk went in after Lovecraft and got him safely out. None of us, surely, was under any illusion as to what might very well happen in such an obscure corner of the city.

Just previous to his coming to Brooklyn, and no doubt as part of her campaign to impress herself upon Lovecraft, his wife-to-be had issued an elaborate number of an amateur magazine, *The Rainbow*. It contained half-tone reproductions of Lovecraft's portrait, together with portraits of his friends and articles or poems from their pens. It was a great success from the amateur journalist's point-of-view, and I believe it may have been during the early stage of her married life with Lovecraft that she decided to issue another one. Printing costs being then, as now, quite high, I suppose the first issue cost a couple of hundred dollars. The second could not have cost much less. I don't know what crisis took place in her affairs at this time—she had been holding a well-paid job as "buyer" in an uptown hat shop—but to pay for this issue she made an arrangement with the printer whereby his wife could obtain all the hats she wanted up to the amount of the bill. I am almost certain that Lovecraft was prominently featured in the first *Rainbow*, but he may have had enough influence to keep himself out of too conspicuous a place in the second. But this is mere conjecture.

In connection with his marriage, I remember very well the arrival from Providence of a surprising mass of material intended for his new home. There were heaps of fine linen, quite a few pieces of heavy, old-fashioned silverware, and other items which had probably been stored away for years. All Lovecraft's literary impedimenta—his books, pictures, files of correspondence and typewriter—were soon installed in a light, pleasant room of the apartment at 595 Parkside Avenue. Dropping in to see him and his wife, I could not forebear commenting on the speed with which everything had been placed in order. "Why, this looks as if you had lived here always," I said. He looked extremely gratified and, while I cannot recall the exact language he used, he explained that this was one way in which a gentleman could be recognized; a gentleman always made himself at home no matter where he happened to be.

His residence with Mrs. Lovecraft certainly resulted, at least for a time, in outward evidences of well-being. She was an excellent cook, and her meals were far from meager. Those who are familiar with photographs of the cadaverous, hollow-eyed Lovecraft may be surprised to learn that he grew stout for a while. I remember, after a jaunt with Kirk, Loveman, and Long, parting from him at some Brooklyn El station, and being amazed at his girth, which impressed me forcibly as I watched him walking up the stairs. His shoulders had always been quite broad, and he was naturally tapering at the waist, but he filled out astonishingly at this time. Never again, however, did I gain the same impression of him.

It may have been shortly after this, and he and his wife may even have been away from Parkside by then, that he began writing letters in answer to want-ads. We all know now that Lovecraft had nothing to gain from a commercial connection. His job was to write stories, and he should have been allowed to continue as he was doing. But the situation in which he found himself after his unfortunate marriage seemed to require that he make some effort to find a permanent connection with a regular salary. A few of his "job-hunting" letters were seen by some from whom a little more understanding might have been expected; I think I am justified in saying that they were the sort of letters a temporarily straitened English gentleman might have written in an effort to

make a profitable connection in the business world of the day before yesterday. Their tone was all wrong, of course. I think he received one reply and a request that he call, and he called once and again, but it remained my impression that the man who sent for him was looking for some interesting conversation. Nothing resulted, of course, as nothing should have resulted, and Lovecraft was shortly free to live the life he preferred to live.

Years later, possibly in the early 1930's, when Lovecraft had long returned to Providence and his New York episode was closed, I met his former wife by accident in the lobby of the St. George Hotel, in Brooklyn. Despite all one may think of the bizarre affair of Lovecraft's marriage, I am inclined to believe that the former Sonia Greene, however misguided or ill-advised, was sincere in her own way. I come to this conclusion merely from what she said when leaving me on this occasion. It was with some surprise that I beheld her walking by the divan where I sat. She was no longer the same woman, having grown perceptibly older. She was dressed very plainly, wore spectacles, and had no hat. Her hair, still dark, was worn quite flat on her head, and there were no signs of the rebellious locks which had formerly been one of her adornments. Physically, she had grown no slenderer. She espied me, and I rose. All I recall of what passed between us in that brief moment are her words, "How is H. P. L.?"

At least once, Lovecraft accompanied me on one of my Sunday hikes with the Paterson Rambling Club. This was to be a short walk not very far above Haledon, a few miles beyond the center of Paterson, New Jersey, but we were all dressed in full outdoor panoply, with hunters' coats, khaki breeches, leggings, stout shoes, and knapsacks on our backs. Lovecraft expressed his admiration of my "spectacular" attire, but added that he had never felt the need of such trappings for the kind of country walks he preferred. Leaving the train at the Paterson station, we started for the City Hall, where the hikers were to meet. Happening to pass a drug store with a selection of post-cards displayed in the window, Lovecraft suggested pausing for a moment while he purchased and addressed a few. The few cards required almost an hour, and some readers will

remember the sort of card Lovecraft was likely to send. The postmark usually obliterated the upper part of what he wrote, and this, combined with his microscopic script, made his messages somewhat difficult to decipher. He usually left but the smallest space for the address, but the cards always reached their destination, though on occasion I received such cards with an extra "one cent due" stamp on them, which only added to my difficulties in reading them, whether or not it was an illegal affixation. No doubt the Post Office considered that a letter would be more suitable for such extensive communications!

Nothing notable occurred on this particular hike, but George Kirk once told me a story of an excursion made by Lovecraft and himself to some similar locality. Stopping at a rural refreshment stand, they beheld two sturdy women hikers, attired in breeches and with all accessories, not an unusual sight today, also in quest of refreshment. One of them of a particularly virile and commanding type strode aggressively past Kirk and Lovecraft. "Well," commented Lovecraft, "at least, you can't say *she's* effeminate!"

There were many other trips to all parts of the city and its boroughs which Lovecraft made, but I was not able to participate in many of them. At least once, Lovecraft and Kirk offered to "walk" me home from Columbia Heights. Since I lived in Bushwick, this was quite a jaunt for a nocturnal hour, along block after block for mile on mile, until the flashes and thunders of the El became evident—and half a mile remained to be covered after that! Lovecraft was undoubtedly a persistent and tireless pedestrian, but I think this walk proved a little too much even for him. Kirk and he, and of course, myself, reached Bushwick Avenue finally; this was quite near to my destination, but here Lovecraft's physical powers suddenly waned. He became dizzy and weak and had to sit down on a nearby stoop. He was probably much more of a sick man, even in those days, than some of us realized. Only three more blocks remained to be walked, but here I made my farewells and, being hopeful that Lovecraft had merely yielded to a passing spell of weakness, left him with Kirk. There were transit systems within easy reach, and I know they did not walk back.

But those days are long gone by—more than twenty years ago, though Lovecraft remained a faithful correspondent for many years after the 1920's. And for me, as for all who knew him, his passing left a vacuum no one else can fill.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft

By SAMUEL LOVEMAN

AMERICAN LITERATURE has produced three great writers of terror fiction: Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce and Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It has been my good fortune—certainly, no inconsiderable one—to have been on intimate terms with two of these: Ambrose Bierce and Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

It is now nearly thirty years ago that I received a letter, fantastically worded and written in an obsolete style that simulated the early 1700's, with meticulously-rounded sentences that made me hover (as I read) between sheer envy and downright laughter. I remember the inscription at the close: "I remain, dear Sir, your Most Humble, Obedient Servant, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Esquire." The gist of the letter was this: the writer had long been an ardent admirer of my poetry, and its appearance had, from time to time, excited his admiration to such a degree that he had made bold to institute inquiries as to my whereabouts. He had, he asserted, practically given up any hope of finding me, when a clue to my location was indicated. Hence, his letter of inquiry: was I alive or dead? Would I write to him if I were still in the land of the living? I had always been a legend to him—could I, or rather would I, remove his doubts?

I removed them. Letters were exchanged and flew back and forth between us. I have never been a good letter-writer and the demands that Lovecraft made upon his correspondents were prodigious as well as extraordinary. A letter of a single page on one side, could (and usually did) evoke an answer of from forty to fifty closely-written pages. They were wonderful letters—marvelously readable, astonishingly erudite, incredibly human. Their range of subjects was monumental: Astronomy, Sorcery, Witchcraft, Archeology, English Literature, Cabalism, Dutch

New York, 18th Century Poetry, Alexander Pope, Roman Sculpture, Greek Vases, Decadence of the Alexandrian Period, Baths of Caracalla, T. S. Eliot, Hart Crane—heaven alone could enumerate their infinite range and breath-taking variety! They were written with a verbal abundance and a feeling for prose construction, that the best of us might well envy. Lovecraft was a stickler for grammar and syntax.

The upshot of it was that we arranged to meet in New York, to visit the very beautiful woman who was later to become Howard's wife. She was (let this be affirmed for once and for all) the very soul of loyalty, graciousness and lavish generosity. We occupied her apartment near Prospect Park in Brooklyn, while she removed herself nightly to sleep in a neighbor's rooms on the same floor. The long evenings of conversation between the three of us, the endless discussions as to what was and what was not permissible in good writing, the timelessness of everything, are phases of my visit that I keenly recollect—with a little shiver over the passing of years—it seems all so long ago. Howard's conversation was without boundaries, on any subject. I have never known him to hold the slightest resentment against any one; I have never known a human being to secrete less envy, malice, morbidity and intolerance, than did Howard. Toward the worst of rascals or scoundrels, there was not a single line of remonstrance. "Only another arrangement of chemical molecules," he was wont to ascribe to any persons malingering in the long and particularly fine range of his lifelong friendships or acquaintances. His sense of irony as well as his projection of quiet humor with an occasional jet of ambient and satirical badinage, was complete.

He visited me in Cleveland, where I procured a room for him close to where I lived. There were wonderful walks at night and a marvelously brilliant but solid exchange of conversations. I had, in Cleveland, become the friend of Hart Crane, and it is one of the singular occurrences among not a few in my life, that these two men of genius met on a personal basis. Neither cared for the other. Crane demoded Lovecraft as old-fashioned and the soul of pedantry; Lovecraft, on the other hand, sardonically and not without mimicry, disparaged Crane's modernity as

well as his morality. Both settled with tolerance for one another, during an entire evening devoted to a coruscating glorification of the heavenly cosmogeny; Lovecraft's knowledge of astronomy was phenomenal. It was in Cleveland that Howard confided to me that he had long since visited the battlefield at Lexington, in company with our friend, James Ferdinand Morton, Jr., grandson of the composer of *My Country 'tis of Thee*.

"Were you stirred to patriotism over your visit to this hallowed spot?" I asked.

"Yes," he responded, "I was—but not in the direction that you would imagine. When James Ferdinand and I stood before the grave of the Revolutionary soldier who had been the first to fall on this memorable and lamentable occasion, I bared and bowed my head. 'So perish all enemies and traitors to his Majesty, King George the Third!' I cried."

"Rubbish!" I commented, "Did you really feel that way?"

"I did, and most profoundly," he announced with fervor. "Our severance from the British Dominion has been the head of a long line of cataclysmic disasters. I am a Tory, sir! I still declare my everlasting and loyal allegiance to England, God bless her!" He meant it.

Lovecraft's stay in New York, after the separation from his wife (a tragedy to those who knew the inside of the affair), was one of complete rebellion against everything that the huge city had to offer. He hated the noise, the interminable rudeness of the inhabitants, the rowdy and rancid slums. He confided to me a way that he had found of reaching the New York Public Library at the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue (his favorite haunt)—without so much as exposing himself or walking more than a dozen feet, up the marble library steps from the subway nearby. He declaimed with flushed cheeks and a rising voice against (so he called it) "the mixed mongrel population—the very scum and dregs of Europe and the Near East," that filled and permeated the area of the entire city. He anticipated with a heart-breaking intensity and longing that only his closest friends knew—a liberation and return to New England—back to his beloved Providence with its antique gables

and narrow streets, to the Colonial reconstruction of what is now known to the readers of his weird fiction as "Arkham country."

It was only at night that Lovecraft actually began to live. Then it was that we had long walks together, in and out of the dusky thoroughfares of lower New York, ending up in a state of somnolent and dreamy contentment, on a park-bench in leafy Washington Square. Howard's faculty for searching and ferreting out old houses that had originally been Colonial in spite of the multiplicity of their modern architectural alterations—was truly amazing. He loved every line, every angle of the 17th and 18th centuries. A visit we made to Salem, Marblehead and Boston, remains indelibly fixed in my memory. Salem we did at sunset, and the memory of a pause in our long tramp, lingering for a few moments at the foot of Witch Hill, while Lovecraft conjured up—across a black sky streaked with sinister scarlet—the row of imaginary gibbets and the fury of the demoniacal populace silhouetted across the horizon, are unforgettable. Marblehead he knew and loved. For the fortunate companion who accompanied him to Boston, it may be affirmed that he became a veritable guide-book.

These few, slight notes would be sadly incomplete without some scattered references to Howard's procedure and method in his process of weird-story writing. He wrote rapidly and without effort. *The Shunned House*, of which I have the original manuscript, tells the tale of easy, fluent writing. His own work he spoke of lightly and even disparagingly, without the slightest conception of its lasting quality. The ego that stimulates many of us to write or create, was—in his instance—entirely absent. "Much that I have written, I have dreamed," he once confided to me. "*The Statement of Randolph Carter* was altogether a dream. You," he said to me, "were 'Harley Warren' in that story. I dreamed of a huge and ancient graveyard filled with tombs, and the marble graves as old as eternity, with crawling ivy underfoot, and each mouldering slab covered by a growth of green moss and evil lichen. And as I strolled through those ominous precincts, I became aware of a voice that called me. Impelled by fear and urged through sheer horror, I made my way to the one grave that seemed to open and yawn with flaring, blinding lights

before me, the voice—your voice—calling—calling. . . . I descended and followed the voice, the voice that was yours, into the hollow obscurity of that unspeakable grave!”

A visit to Providence and a walk at midnight to the scene of *The Shunned House* near his own home with Lovecraft, still brings the thrill that it brought to me so many years ago. “You shall see it,” he announced, after we had decided to visit the spot of his finest creation in terror. “It isn’t so far off,” he continued. “Directly across is the little graveyard where Sarah Helen Whitman walked with Edgar Allan Poe, which adjoins the house she lived in. He courted her in that uncanny but romantic place.” So shortly after midnight we sallied forth (the phrase seems apropos) and made our way by brilliant moonlight to Howard’s original of *The Shunned House*. “It is owned by a retired, wealthy bachelor,” he confided, “who no longer lives in it.” “And this place,” I queried, “held the incredible, intolerable horror of your tale?” “Unquestionably,” he replied humorously. “There are those,” he added with a sinister intonation, “who say *the end is not yet!*” I stood and surveyed the solid, frame building, opaquely silent, with windows barred and shuttered, the old roof flooded with clear moonlight. “And now,” he announced, “we must walk down into the graveyard where Sarah Helen Whitman became affianced to Edgar Allan Poe.” I followed with no little misgiving. The path was devious, rugged and winding. It slipped down the dark hill where Providence lay like a cup of silver in the vague and misty valley below. “Anything could happen here,” I muttered with some misgiving. Howard jeered at me not unkindly. “Nothing ever does,” he replied rapidly with emphasis. “The conjurations that the brain has given forth, have bred all the misbegotten superstition and errant bigotry of witchcraft and miracle-mongering down the long and dusty ages. Science is true and irrefutable. Look at the stars above you!” He began to talk astronomy. It had become freezing cold and the stars continued to glitter like so many diamonds, as we ascended the hill to the house where Lovecraft lived. He was in high humor, demurring over what he considered the early hour we were forced to retire. At five the next morning we left for Boston.

Lovecraft as I Knew Him

By SONIA H. DAVIS

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT and I met in 1921 and we were married at New York in March 1924. What follows here may to all intents and purposes be called the true story of his private life. It differs somewhat from that given by most of his biographers.

For instance, I have recently read the late W. Paul Cook's *In Memoriam: Howard Phillips Lovecraft*. As far as it goes it is a very interesting and worthy eulogy of a truly great person. But it contains—as do other accounts—several misconceptions about Howard's life, and especially of events in the years 1921-1932 of which no one but myself knows.

Of various early incidents in his life, not generally repeated to others, Howard himself told me. Of other incidents I speak from my own experience while still his wife; some of these are of a very personal nature.

I first met Howard Lovecraft at a Boston convention of the Amateur Journalists. I admired his personality but, frankly, at first not his person.

As he was always trying to find recruits for Amateur Journalism, he offered to send me samples of work—his own and others'—which appeared in the different amateur journals: non-paying little papers and magazines, privately printed and circulated. From then on we kept up quite a steady correspondence, and I felt highly flattered when he told me in some of his letters that mine indicated a freshness not born of immaturity but rather a "re-freshingness" because of the originality and courage of my convictions when I disagreed with him.

I disagreed often, not just to be disagreeable: if possible I wanted to remove some of Howard's intensely fixed ideas.

During many months of correspondence H. P. mentioned the names of several writer-friends, many of whom he knew through letters only. One

of these whom he particularly lauded was Samuel Loveman of Cleveland, Ohio. "Samuelus," Howard called him—he was always romanizing names of his friends. Howard had a great regard for Loveman and used him in the story called *Randolph Carter*.

When one of my business trips took me to Cleveland for the first time, I indeed found Samuel Loveman to be all the things H. P. had said about him. And at the end of my day's work there, Loveman surprised me by calling together, at a moment's notice almost, a meeting of all the available Cleveland amateur journalists.

At the end of a very pleasant evening we all signed our names to a Cleveland postcard and sent it to Howard, and when I wrote him later I deplored the fact he too could not have been with us. I said his presence would have made my happiness complete for that evening. His reply, though bountifully mixed with reservations, was quite warm and appreciative—coming from him.

So now I had two correspondents: Lovecraft and Loveman. I decided to invite them both to New York, to meet at last, and to spend Christmas and New Years. I turned my Parkside Avenue apartment over to them. A neighbor gave me sleeping space in hers. And evenings the two men would meet me and we would go to dinner and see a play, or sometimes have a conclave of "amateur" friends—James F. Morton, Jr. (who had introduced me to Lovecraft), Frank Belknap Long, Reinhardt Kleiner and others.

Never having done such a thing before, I was somewhat amazed at myself—inviting two men at my expense to be my guests. I had one excellent reason having to do with Howard's race prejudices of which I shall speak later on.

I remember one evening we went to a fashionable Italian restaurant. It was the first time Howard had ever been in an Italian restaurant (he was then in his early thirties), the first time he had ever eaten minestrone or spaghetti with meat and tomato sauce and Parmesan cheese. He balked at wine. He said he never had tasted any alcohol and didn't wish to begin now.

Soon Loveman returned to Cleveland, but Howard stayed on.

My neighbor who was so kindly making room for me had a beautiful Persian cat. When Howard saw that cat he made love to it. He seemed to have a language that it understood and it immediately curled up in his lap and purred.

Half in earnest, half joking, I said, "What a lot of perfectly good affection to waste on a mere cat—when a woman might highly appreciate it!"

He said, "How can any woman love a face like mine?"

"A mother can," I replied, "and some who are not mothers would not have to try very hard." We all laughed and Howard went on stroking the cat.

Howard's voice was clear and resonant when he read. It became thin and high-pitched in conversation, somewhat falsetto. His singing voice, though not strong, was very sweet. He would sing none of the modern songs—only the more favored old ones.

Howard's mother had hoped her child would be a girl, and as a baby he looked like a beautiful little girl. A photograph shows him with a mass of flaxen curls which he wore until he was about six. When at last he protested, his mother took him to the barber's where she cried bitterly as he was shorn. (These curls were kept: Howard once showed them to me.)

Once when we were looking at an early photograph of him, he exclaimed, "And look at me now!" His very plain face he attributed, he said, to two reasons. At 15 or 16 he fell and broke his nose when he and another boy were racing their bicycles. The other reason, he said wryly, was that nightly he would look up at the stars through his telescope. Actually, he resembled his mother very much. Though less pronounced in the womenfolk, the entire Phillips family had the prognathous jaw and the extremely short upper lip. Howard was fond of making caricatures of himself as he would appear when he became old.

Well—to return to Howard with the Persian cat—I felt that if he could be made to feel more confident of his genius as a writer and to forget his "awful looks," as he put it, he would become less diffident and more happy. So whenever an opportunity presented itself I would not avoid giving him compliments.

When Howard, still in New York, went out with "the boys" for several evenings I realized how poignantly I missed him. I suggested that instead of his going home to Providence, we bring "Providence" to Parkside Avenue. Each of us wrote an urgent invitation to the aunts with whom he lived, Mrs. Lillian Clark and Mrs. Annie Gamwell, and Mrs. Gamwell came for a few weeks.

After their return to Providence I was not ashamed to write him how very much I missed him. His appreciation of this led us both to more serious ground.

I knew Howard was not in a position to marry. Of his Grandfather Phillips' estate there was only about \$20,000 left, and that was supposed to last the rest of the lives of his two aunts and himself. Had he been less proud to write for money he need not have starved himself. He would say "I write to please myself only; and if a few of my friends enjoy my 'effusions' I feel well repaid."

He spent much of his time revising the atrocious work of others, for which he was paid a pittance. He would wear himself out over some of the trash he was asked to revise, some of it for authors who later became well known and prosperous.

Meanwhile his letters indicated his desire to leave Providence and settle in New York. Each of us meditated the possibilities of a life together. Some of our friends suspected. I admitted to friends that I cared very much for Howard and that if he would have me I would gladly be his wife. But nothing definite was decided.

I came to America when I was nine years old, a White Russian of the old Czarist regime. In 1899, when I was 16, I married a fellow-countryman who had adopted the name of a Boston friend, Greene. My husband died in 1916. By him I have one daughter who was for several years Paris correspondent for various American newspapers. After my divorce from Howard Lovecraft I married Nathaniel A. Davis, a former professor at the University of California at Berkeley, and we were very happy during the ten years before his death.

At the time of my meeting Howard Lovecraft I held an executive position with a fashionable women's wear establishment on Fifth Avenue. My salary was close to \$10,000 a year.

On my business trips to Boston I would stop off at Providence and the aunts and Howard would dine with me at the Biltmore. They all enjoyed these occasions, but they thought me extravagant. The aunts would not join me in Boston but they condescended to trust Howard alone with me there. I would attend to business during the daytime, while Howard explored museums, graveyards, old houses and whatnot. At least once on each visit we would have our dinner at a Greek restaurant which H. P. favored for its tiled walls depicting scenes from Greek classics. He loved to talk to me of ancient Greece and Rome while I, in turn, considered it a great privilege after a hard day's work to listen to him. Later he would show me the historical places in Boston and we would walk the old, narrow streets.

Once we visited Magnolia, Massachusetts. As we walked along the esplanade there one evening we heard a peculiar snorting, grunting noise, loud in the distance. The moon made a path on the water. Emergent tops of piles in the water were connected with rope, like a huge spider web.

"Oh, Howard," I said, "here you have the setting for a really strange and mysterious story."

"Go ahead, and write it," he said.

"Oh, no, I couldn't do it justice."

"Try it. Tell me what the scene pictures to your imagination."

After we parted for the night I sat up and wrote the general outline which he later revised and edited. His enthusiasm next day was so genuine that I surprised and shocked him right then and there by kissing him.

He was so flustered that he blushed and then he turned pale. When I chaffed him about it he said he had not been kissed since he was a very small child. (I know he had loved his mother and he loved his aunts in a positive way, but he was not demonstrative in his affections.) He said he would probably never be kissed again. But I fooled him.

It was after that vacation in Magnolia that our more intimate correspondence began which led to our marriage. H. P. wrote me of everything he did, everywhere he went: sometimes filling 30, 40, even 50 pages with his fine writing. There were two years of almost daily correspondence. Then he decided to break away from Providence.

Early in March 1924, Howard came to New York. I had asked him to tell his aunts he was going to marry me, but he said he preferred to surprise them. In the matter of details—securing the license, buying the ring, etc.—he seemed to be jovial. He said one would think he was being married for the 'nth time, he went about it in such a methodical way.

The man at the marriage bureau thought I was the younger. I was seven years Howard's senior, and he said nothing could please him better: that Sarah Helen Whitman was older than Poe, and that Poe might have met with better fortune had he married her.

I thought a civil marriage would be sufficient, but Howard insisted that we be married by a Christian minister and that the marriage take place in St. Paul's Church—"where Washington and Lord Howe and many other great men had worshiped!" In this, as later in so many other things, I let him have his way. In nearly everything he was the "victor" and I the "vanquished." I would gainsay him nothing if I thought it would eradicate his complexes.

The night before our marriage Howard absent-mindedly left in the Providence station the Houdini manuscript—that is, an article which he had ghost-written for the famed magician. It was not, as someone has said, "a public stenographer" who copied the hand-written notes which H. P. still had. I alone was able to read those crossed out notes.

I read them slowly to him while he pounded at a typewriter borrowed from the hotel in Philadelphia where we were spending our first day and night. So we spent them, and when the manuscript was finished we were too tired and exhausted for honeymooning or anything else. But I wouldn't let Howard down, and the manuscript reached the publisher in time.

The only money Howard ever spent on me which he had earned was what he had received for that article. When I insisted only half the amount be used for a wedding-ring, he insisted the future Mrs. Howard Phillips Lovecraft must have the finest, with diamonds all around it, even if it took all the proceeds of that first well-paid story.

I called him a dear, generous spendthrift. He said there would be

more where that came from—which, alas, did not materialize except in stipends when he sold a story (not too often) to *Weird Tales*.

When we were married he was gaunt and hungry-looking, too much so even for my taste. I used to cook a well-balanced meal every evening, making a substantial breakfast (he loved cheese soufflé for breakfast!), and I'd leave a few (almost Dagwoodian) sandwiches, cake and fruit for his lunch.

Sometimes he would meet me after my day's work; we would dine out and go to a theater. He had no conception of time. Even in bitter wintry weather I often had to wait in some lobby or at some street corner from three-quarters of an hour to an hour and a half. He was always late for an appointment, whether it was with me or anyone else.

Here I must record an extraordinary story about this master of weird stories. Howard was allergic to the spices of the mummified corpses at the Metropolitan Museum. Near them, his hands and wrists became swollen. Sometime after we had left the Museum the swelling went down and we thought no more of it. But about a week later we returned to see and study as much as we could of Tut-ankha-men's tomb, and again Howard's wrists and hands began to swell. I urged him to consult a doctor, but Howard laughed it off and refused. He never wanted to have a doctor, no matter how ill he was.

During our life at Parkside Avenue he became quite stout, and he looked and felt marvelous. He really became a more interesting human being. I think he half-starved himself before he knew me, and probably starved once more after we separated permanently.

I criticized his ten-year-old overcoat and insisted on buying him a new coat, suit, hat, gloves, and even a billfold. (I didn't like the tiny, old-fashioned pocketbook he would unsnap to take out change.) Looking at himself in the mirror he protested: "But, my dear, this is entirely too stylish for 'Grandpa Theobald,' it doesn't look like me. I look like some fashionable fop!" And I really think he was glad when the new suit and coat were later stolen; he had the old ones to resume.

Before our marriage I tried to contribute to his ease and comfort by sending him the stamps for his voluminous correspondence, and by gifts

of money at birthday and holiday times. If at any time he lacked money I did not know it, and while he was my husband I saw to it that he was supplied out of my earnings. His aunts, out of his own share of the Phillips estate, were supposed to send him \$15 a week; but while I provided for him they sent only \$5 and that not always regularly.

I told Howard they need not send him anything if they found it difficult, that some day he would earn more than I. In jest I used to say "You'll pay it all back with interest I'm sure." And we'd both laugh about it. Often he would spend much of the money on books, for me or for some of his friends; and he sometimes gave them money. Two of the amateur brotherhood wrote him the letters of gentle grafters and he would go without things himself in order to aid them. No one knew of this save myself and his beneficiaries.

I effaced my own interests and deferred to him upon all matters and domestic problems regardless of what they were. Even to the spending of money I not only consulted him but tried to make him feel that he was the head of the house.

I soon found it necessary to accept an exceedingly well-paid job out of town. I wanted Howard to make his home with me there, but he said he would hate to live in a midwestern city, he would prefer to remain in New York where at least he had some friends. I suggested he have one of them come to live with him in our apartment, but his aunts thought it wiser for me to store and sell my furniture and find a studio room large enough for Howard to have the old pieces he had brought from Providence. It was then that the Clinton Street, Brooklyn address was decided upon.

I could be in New York only a few days at a time, every three or four weeks. I gave him money each time I came to town and I sent him weekly checks.

He admired the quaintness of that part of Brooklyn, and at first he seemed to love his Clinton Street setup. But the crowds in the subway, streets and parks he hated, and he suffered through that hate. He referred chiefly to Semitic peoples: "beady-eyed, rat-faced Asiatics," he called them. In general, all foreigners were "mongrels."

Long before we were married, Howard wrote me in a letter praising Samuel Loveman that the only "discrepancy" he could find in Loveman was that he was a Jew. I replied in amazement at such discrimination and reminded him—as I did constantly—that I, too, came of Hebrew people. It was his prejudice against minorities, especially Jews, which prompted me to that simultaneous invitation of Howard and Loveman to New York of which I have spoken.

Later H. P. assured me he was quite "cured." But unfortunately (and here I must speak of something I never intended to have publicly known), whenever we found ourselves in the racially-mixed crowds which characterize New York, Howard would become livid with rage. He seemed almost to lose his mind. And it was this attitude toward minorities and his desire to escape them that was one of the factors which eventually prompted him back to Providence.

Soon after our marriage he told me that whenever we had company he would appreciate it if "Aryans" were in the majority. As a matter of fact, I think he hated humanity in the abstract. He once said: "It is more important to know what to hate than it is to know what to love." And he believed it was better to be dead than alive, best of all not to be born. It was good, he thought, to be in that state of oblivion before birth.

A better understanding of Lovecraft may be gained in reading Gissing's *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, a book Howard gave me early in the life of our romance. Throughout, it elucidates much of Howard's own personality, his attitude toward the masses and toward life in general. Non-religious and antidemocratic, Howard's code was to let his fellowmen alone and mind his own business. As for me, whenever I protested I was one of the "alien hordes," he would say: "You are now Mrs. H. P. Lovecraft of 598 Angell Street, Providence, Rhode Island."

In the opening paragraphs of one of his stories (*He*), which most people who knew him regarded as in part autobiographical, Lovecraft wrote, "I . . . still refrained from going home to my people lest I seem to crawl back ignobly in defeat." This is only part of the truth. He wanted more than anything else to go back to Providence but he also wanted me to come along. This I could not do because there was no

situation in Providence fitting my abilities and needs. And since he was reluctant to return without me, he remained at Clinton Street, whence the foregoing cry.

I believe he loved me as much as it was possible for a temperament like his to love. He never mentioned the word "love." He would say, "My dear, you don't know how much I appreciate you." I tried to understand him and was grateful for any crumbs from his lips that fell my way.

Our family nicknames of "Socrates" and "Xantippe" were originated by me. I saw in Howard a Socratic wisdom and genius. I had hoped in time to humanize him further, to lift him out of his abysmal depths of loneliness and psychic complexes by a true, wedded love. I am afraid my optimism and excessive self-assurance misled us both. (His love of the weird and mysterious, I believe, was born of sheer loneliness.)

I had hoped, in other words, that my embrace would make of him not only a great genius but also a lover and husband. While the genius developed and broke through the chrysalis, the lover and husband receded into the background until they were apparitions that finally vanished.

It has been said—quoting letters of Howard's—that our separation was mainly caused by his lack of money. That is not true. The real reasons my own story makes evident. Marvelous person though he was, it was probably to "save face" that Howard, having to give a reason, offered one that might be most easily believed.

When Howard felt he could no longer tolerate Brooklyn, it was I who suggested he return to Providence. He'd say, "If I could . . . live in Providence, the blessed city where I was born and reared. I am sure, there, I could be happy." I agreed. I said, "I'd love nothing better than to live in Providence if I could do my work there."

Well, he returned, and I followed him much later. Again: it is not true that his aunts "dispatched a truck which brought Howard back to Providence lock, stock and barrel." I made a special trip from out of town to help him pack his things, to see to it all was well before he left, and to pay—his railroad fare and all—out of my own funds.

Eventually we held a conference with the aunts. I suggested I take

a large house in Providence, hire a maid, pay the expenses, and we all live together; our family to use one side of the house, I to use the other for a business venture of my own. The aunts gently but firmly informed me that neither they nor Howard could afford to have Howard's wife work for a living in Providence. That was that. I knew then where we all stood.

To be not too far from Providence where I could spend some weekends, I took a new and less well-paying job in New York. (The time was now 1927.) But there was a Chicago job too good to refuse, and I knew I could have Howard meet me in New York every few weeks on my buying trips. I hated Chicago, though, and after six months—at Christmas—I decided to try Providence for a short vacation while waiting for something to happen, I didn't know what.

I spent several weeks there. But I soon needed money, so I returned to New York, rented an apartment, retrieved from storage what was left of my furniture and set up housekeeping by myself. I opened a small millinery shop in the neighborhood.

Our marital life for the next few months was spent on reams of paper in rivers of ink. That spring I invited Howard to visit me and he gladly accepted, as a visitor only. To me, even his nearness was better than nothing. The visit lasted throughout the summer but I saw him only during the early morning hours when he would return from jaunts with Morton, Loveman, Long, Kleiner, some or all of them. Then he visited Vrest Orton at Yonkers and returned to Providence in the early fall.

Then we lived in letters again.

Howard was perfectly willing and even satisfied to live this way, but not I. I began urging a divorce. He tried every method he could devise to persuade me how much he appreciated me: divorce would cause him great unhappiness; a gentleman does not divorce his wife unless he has cause, and he had none.

I told him I had done everything I could think of to make our marriage a success, but that no marriage could be such in letter-writing only.

Howard said he knew of a very happy couple whose marriage was kept intact by letters: the wife living with her parents, and the husband because of his illness living elsewhere.

I replied that neither of us was really sick and I did not wish to be a "long-distance" wife. I told him it was all impossible, that he ought to divorce me and find and marry a young woman of his own background and culture, live in Providence and try to live a happy, normal life.

"No, my dear," he would say, "if you leave me I shall never marry again. You do not realize how much I appreciate you."

"But your way of demonstrating," I would reply, "is so unheard of!"

The divorce came in 1929. On a friendly but impersonal basis we occasionally corresponded.

In 1932 I went to Europe. I was almost tempted to invite him along, but I knew he would not accept. However, I wrote him from England, Germany and France, sent him books and pictures of every conceivable thing I thought might interest him. And I sent him a travelogue which he revised for me.

After my return to the United States I was quite ill. On recuperating, I went to Farmington, Connecticut. I was so enchanted by the 18th century beauty of it that I wrote Howard at once to join me there, which he did. We explored the town and also Weathersfield.

I believe I still loved Howard very much, more than I cared to admit even to myself. Although in my travels I had met many eligible men and some offering proposals of marriage, for eight years I met none who did not seem inadequate in intellect compared to Howard. When we parted for the night I said, "Howard, won't you kiss me goodnight?" He said, "No, it is better not to."

The next day we explored Hartford, and when we parted that night I no longer asked for a kiss. I had learned my lesson well.

I never saw Howard again.

Off and on we still corresponded, after I moved to California. Here I soon met and married Dr. Davis. It was here, too, I met Mr. Wheeler Dryden who told me of Howard Lovecraft's death.

I do not believe it an exaggeration to say that Howard had the mind,

taste and personality of a much greater artist and genius than that with which he was accredited in his lifetime. He will be, I am quite sure, a legendary, mysterious figure. The irony is that he died before the rewards and celebrity of his labors occurred. I like to believe that time mellowed him, that he found other men of all sorts to be normal, kindly folk. And even though I am not his widow, I mourn in sorrow and reverence his untimely passing.

Addenda to "H. P. L.: A Memoir"

By AUGUST DERLETH

I. LOVECRAFT'S SENSITIVITY

WRITING in *The Providence Journal*, September 19, 1948, Miss Clara L. Hess of Warwick Neck, Rhode Island, perhaps unconsciously provided students of Lovecraft a clue to understanding the sometimes apparently abnormal sensitivity he manifested about his personal appearance, and suggested also some clarification of the direction his fiction took.

"Howard Lovecraft and I grew up in the same 'old time' East Side neighborhood in Providence when there were open fields covered with buttercups and daisies in the Butler Avenue-Angell Street-Orchard Avenue area. Although of a younger generation, I knew Howard's mother better than I knew Howard who even as a young boy was strange and rather a recluse, who kept by himself and hid from other children because, as his mother said, he could not bear to have people look upon his awful face. She would talk of his looks (it seemed to be an obsession with her) which would not have attracted any particular attention if he had been normal as were the other children in the community. They, because of the strangeness of his personality, kept aloof and had little to say to him.

"I first remember meeting Mrs. Lovecraft when I was a very little girl at the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Phillips on Angell Street where I visited often. At that time Mrs. Lovecraft was living on the corner of Angell Street and Elmgrove Avenue. She was very pretty and attractive, with a beautiful and unusually white complexion—got, it was said, by eating arsenic, although whether there was any truth to this story I do not know. She was an intensely nervous person.

"Later when she moved into the little downstairs flat in the house on

Angell Street around the corner from Butler Avenue I met her often on the Butler Avenue cars, and one day after many urgent invitations I went in to call upon her. She was considered then to be getting rather odd. My call was pleasant enough but the house had a strange and shutup air and the atmosphere seemed weird and Mrs. Lovecraft talked continuously of her unfortunate son who was so hideous that he hid from everyone and did not like to walk upon the streets where people could gaze at him.

"When I protested that she was exaggerating and that he should not feel that way, she looked at me with a rather pitiful look as though I did not understand about it. I remember that I was glad to get out into the fresh air and sunshine and that I did not repeat my visit! Surely it was an environment suited for the writing of horror stories but an unfortunate one for a growing youth who in a more wholesome environment might have grown to be a more normal citizen.

"Howard used to go out into the fields in back of my home to study the stars. One early fall evening several of the children in the vicinity assembled to watch him from a distance. Feeling sorry for his loneliness I went up to him and asked him about his telescope and was permitted to look through it. But his language was so technical that I could not understand it and I returned to my group and left him to his lonely study of the heavens.

"After a time one did not meet Mrs. Lovecraft very often. . . . Sometimes when going around the corner to mail a letter on an early summer evening, one would see a dark figure fluttering about the shrubbery of her home, and I discovered that it was Mrs. Lovecraft.

"Sometimes I would see Howard when walking up Angell Street, but he would not speak and would stare ahead with his coat collar turned up and his chin down. After awhile I heard Mrs. Lovecraft was ill and was away and that the aunts had taken over. I knew nothing more about them until I heard of Howard's marriage which was wondered at by some of those who had known him."

The suggestion inherent in Miss Hess's memories is inescapable. Because of his indifferent health, Lovecraft was kept much in the company

of his family, and he quite naturally developed a very strong sense of family, which in later years made itself most evident in his genealogical research. The question which immediately arises is this—did Howard's mother ever seek to impress him directly with his ugliness? "I do not know that Mrs. Lovecraft ever spoke to her son directly about his 'ugliness'," Miss Hess writes, "but I think he must have known how she regarded him. Howard resembled his mother. She had a peculiarly shaped nose which rather fascinated me, as it gave her a very inquiring expression. Howard looked very much like her.

"In looking back, I cannot ever remember to have seen Mrs. Lovecraft and her son together. I never heard one speak to the other. It probably just happened that way, but it does seem rather strange, as we were neighbors for a considerable period of time. I remember the aunts who came to the little house on Angell Street often, as I recollect, quiet, determined little New England women, quite different from Mrs. Lovecraft, although Mrs. Lovecraft was a very determined person herself. I remember that Mrs. Lovecraft spoke to me about weird and fantastic creatures that rushed out from behind buildings and from corners at dark, and that she shivered and looked about apprehensively as she told her story.

"The last time I saw Mrs. Lovecraft we were both going 'down street' on the Butler Avenue car. She was excited and apparently did not know where she was. She attracted the attention of everyone. I was greatly embarrassed, as I was the object of all her attention. . . . Howard's people were old-fashioned gentlefolk, which meant considerable in the old aristocratic Providence East Side neighborhood prior to World War I. He himself had a cultural background and was a real student and a great reader."

In supplement to Miss Hess's memories, Mrs. Carlos G. Wright, in *The Providence Journal*, October 3, 1948, adds that she grew up in the neighborhood where H. P. Lovecraft lived. "As a little girl I was scared to death of him, for he used to walk rapidly up and down Angell Street at night just as a group of us were playing Hare and Hounds at the corner of Angell and Paterson Streets. His appearance always frightened

me. He was certainly the neighborhood mystery. He would never speak to any of us, but kept right on with his head down."

There is something close to pathos in these accounts. The pictures they afford of Lovecraft as a young man are not happy—despite Lovecraft's many accounts of his pleasant childhood. Clearly, he was an intensely introspective youth, very probably keenly aware of the differences in health and background which set him apart from such companions as he might have had if his development had been more normal. It is entirely probable that his mother, who is seen by these accounts as an hysteric with perhaps a basic paranoia, suffering under the shock of the knowledge of the basis of her husband's fatal paresis, looked upon her son as touched by the same disease. Perhaps she actually saw him as the "hideous" or "ugly" son she told people he was; the decaying mind plays strange and sometimes terrible tricks, which would enable her to believe sincerely in what she said even as she could honestly pity anyone who did not agree with her.

What is undeniable, it seems to me, is Lovecraft's awareness. There are countless clues in much that he has written, but of course the most direct of them are contained in his references to his childhood and youth, the repeated references to his being "peculiar and sensitive," to his preference of "the society of grown persons to that of other children," to his compensatory escape into books—"I could not keep away from printed matter," and, of course, finally to the construction of a world all his own. Certainly he must have known that the mother who doted upon him with selfish and slightly aberrant affection referred to him as hideous; that someone who showed him such obvious affection should think him hideous and ugly must have left his impressionable mind with no alternative but belief.

Was it deliberate on Mrs. Lovecraft's part? Was it, that is, a design by which she hoped to hold her son to her and not risk losing him as she had lost her husband? It may well have been so to some degree; the compensatory mechanism would have had an even stronger motive in her than in Lovecraft himself, for her motivation rose out of bitter personal experience, the outraged gentility which actually affected her mind,

for the occurrence of paresis was a body blow to the strict conventional code to which she and the society of which she was a part adhered so rigidly, while Lovecraft's was a rather more simple compensation which involved nothing more than an adjustment to circumstances which were no part of his making.

We are left to speculate, too, about his "unpopularity" among his playmates. He stressed this in his letters—"Amongst my few playmates I was very unpopular," and later he confessed that he was "repelled by humans" and "sought refuge and companionship in books." That he was aware of such real or fancied unpopularity can hardly be questioned; Mrs. Wright's memory of him walking up and down Angell Street in the dusk, head down, speaking to no one, is the memory of a lonely solitary, isolated from his fellow-men by barriers constructed by him on a foundation laid by someone else. Small wonder that he early sought the world of strange landscapes and fantasies to escape the unhappy solitudes he knew in life; small wonder that his concept of Providence and his home were as part of a landscape which was forever one of dusk and twilight, like something with blurred outlines, an air of unreality and the charm of something remote, personal, and unchanging.

Lovecraft's father died when the boy was eight, his mother lived on until 1921, though her last two years were spent in Butler Hospital. Howard was thirty-one when his mother died. His most impressionable years had been spent under her overweening and affectionate sheltering, and there can be no doubt whatsoever that Mrs. Lovecraft grew steadily more deranged. Though it is probable that Lovecraft never knew the cause of his father's institutionalization and death five years later, it is certain that he felt the effect of it upon his mother. It is likewise evident, though he carefully avoided mentioning the subject in his letters later, that he was cognizant of his mother's mental state, as the precocious child he was became the equally precocious adolescent.

Consider him then, first as the child subjected to the outpouring of grief and shock from a mother who lavished a doting affection upon him, yet considered him "hideous," "ugly," possessed of an "awful face," surrounded by his elders, his grandparents and his aunts, de-

prived, partly by his mother's state of mind, partly by his own choice, of companions his own age; secondly as a precocious young man keenly aware of the progressive mental decay of the mother who had certainly been the symbol of such security as he had known as a child. And this must have been a precarious security, in which his normal sensitivity was abnormally heightened, and one readily understands why he once said to the woman who became his wife, "How can any woman love a face like mine?"

It is not strange, in these circumstances, that he should have been turned in his creative work to subjects which were eerie and outré. His onetime wife, Sonia H. Greene (now Davis), guessed correctly when she wrote, "His love of the weird and mysterious, I believe, was born of sheer loneliness." In her memoir of him she speaks, too, of his "abysmal depths of loneliness and psychic complexes" which were manifest to her all the more poignantly during the period of their marriage; to a young man who had been sharply aware of much unhappiness and more than the usual share of spiritual and physical solitude, the mystery of the unknown would have an uncommonly strong appeal. For the unknown must have appealed to him as but another face of that intimate world of his own, with a personal relationship to that world of twilight Providence, as remote, as charming—and yes, terrible, too—as unchanging, so that the flight forward into the unknown paralleled the flight backward into memory, where the passage of time glossed over and palliated the less happy experiences of those years when his sensitivity to the disturbingly contradictory impressions of his mother's love and apparent abhorrence helped to mould and shape his direction in the world of American letters.

II. LOVECRAFT'S "CONSERVATIVE"

An early interest in amateur press associations matured in Howard Phillips Lovecraft to a lifelong concern to which he gave unsparingly of his time and patience. Collectors of associational items, as well as of such magazines as contribute to a comprehensive bibliography of Lovecraft, face an almost impossible task in their attempt to assemble a complete roster of Lovecraft's contributions to such amateur papers as

Pine Cones, The Tryout, The United Cooperative, The Vagrant, Driftwind, The Voice from the Mountain, The Oracle, The American Amateur, The Credential, The Philosopher, The Rainbow, The Coyote, Pegasus, The Brooklynite, The Californian, The Fantasy Fan, Tesseract, Scat, The Phantagraph, The National Amateur, The United Amateur, Science-Fantasy Correspondent, Causerie, Planeteer, L'Alouette, The Recluse, and others, written not only under his own name but also under such pen-names as Ward Phillips, Humphrey Littlewit, Gent., Lewis Theobald, Jr., Augustus T. Swift, Albert Frederick Willie, Edgar Softly, Richard Raleigh, and others, throughout the teens and the twenties of the present century.

Lovecraft was no newcomer to amateur publication when he was recruited by Edward F. Daas for the United Amateur Press Association in April, 1914. When he was scarcely nine years old, he had written and published *The Scientific Gazette*, issued weekly and devoted to chemistry; it was written in pencil and its editions consisted simply of four carbon copies, which were distributed primarily to members of his family. *The Scientific Gazette*, testifying to the tenacity with which Lovecraft pursued any ideal, appeared from March, 1899 to February, 1904. Meanwhile, in 1903, Lovecraft had begun a second weekly, *The Rhode Island Journal of Astronomy*, which ended as a monthly in 1907. This little magazine was printed in hand-lettering, hectographed, and circulated in editions of twenty-five copies.

It was natural that the urge to edit and publish his own magazine for circulation within the Association of which he was a member should soon take hold of Lovecraft; its first issue appeared in 1915, entirely the work of the editor. Characteristically—for Lovecraft habitually thought of himself as conservative and retiring—he named it *The Conservative*, and in each issue he set apart space for an editorial or two, though that space expanded under the heading *In the Editor's Study* with the issue for October, 1916. The magazine was not designed for regular issue; few amateur papers were, though regularity of issue was an ideal always earnestly striven for. The first issue, for April, 1915, was editorially announced in these Lovecraftian paragraphs:

"The Conservative, in thrusting upon an unsuspecting amateur pub-

lic this first issue of what purports to be a paper, may well adopt that tone of trembling humility which suits the inexperienced beginner.

"As another ambitious novice wrote not long ago in rugged verse:

" 'Mid amateurs and novices, though oft they are winning,
Be it ever so humble, there must be a beginning.
A slap from the critic swiftly brings us to our feet;
Shakes up our senses, and shakes out our conceit.'

"Like the poet, The Conservative expects criticism. He does not, however, expressly solicit it; since he is well aware that critics, like other birds of prey, require but little solicitation before tearing to pieces their latest victim. That his numerous defects and weaknesses will furnish the reviewers' fraternity with a just and ample opportunity for the display of their brilliant superiority, The Conservative is not quite conceited enough to deny; yet he would give warning that he has made a close study of Pope's 'Dunciad' and Paul J. Campbell's 'Wet Hen,' so that he is not altogether defenseless. Reference to 'verbosity,' 'long words,' 'stilted, old-fashioned style,' 'dogmatic opinions' and the like will be entirely unnecessary. The Conservative has heard all this before, and is hopelessly beyond reform. Besides, he may never perpetrate another number of this modest magazine."

Plainly, Lovecraft was well aware of criticism which was destined to be made not only of his little magazine, but also of his ventures into fiction, which were yet to come. The remainder of the initial issue's editorial space was given over to three brief but pointed editorials on matters concerning current issues in amateurdom, and similar subjects occupied much of the editorial space throughout the life of *The Conservative*, which lasted through thirteen issues, the last of which was dated July, 1923.

The second issue of the magazine set forth in two editorials something of the purpose of *The Conservative*, and Lovecraft's reaction to critics of the magazine. In his statement of "journalistic policy," Lovecraft wrote:

"In this, his second issue, The Conservative deems it both proper and necessary to attempt a definition of his journalistic policy, and a forecast

of his future endeavours. Though the title of the sheet affords a general index to its basic character, it is nevertheless well to describe and qualify the exact species of conservatism here represented.

"That the arts of literature and literary criticism will receive prime attention from *The Conservative* seems very probable. The increasing use among us of slovenly prose and lame metre, supported and sustained by the light reviewers of the amateur press, demands an active opponent, even though a lone one, and the profound reverence of *The Conservative* for the polished writers of a more correct age, fits him for a task to which his mediocre talent might not otherwise recommend him.

"When *The Conservative* shall have laid down his task, it is his desire that he may be able to employ with justice the closing words of *The Rambler*, who said, over a century and a half ago: 'Whatever shall be the final sentence of mankind, I have at least endeavoured to deserve their kindness. I have laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarism, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations.'

"Outside the domain of pure literature, *The Conservative* will ever be found an enthusiastic champion of total abstinence and prohibition; of moderate, healthy militarism as contrasted with dangerous and unpatriotic peace-preaching; of Pan-Saxonism, or the domination by the English and kindred races over the lesser divisions of mankind; and of constitutional or representative government, as opposed to the pernicious and contemptible false schemes of anarchy and socialism. Though the first named of these items may superficially appear a rather inappropriate function for a Conservative, it must be remembered, that he who strives against the Hydra-monster Rum, strives most to *conserve* his fellow-men."

These Lovecraftian sentiments were those of a young man of twenty-five; two decades more were to mellow many of these dogmatic opinions considerably, for at his death Lovecraft could not have been described as a conservative, but rather as a liberal, particularly in thought, for in many of his habits he remained extremely conservative throughout his life. Lovecraft's reaction to the critics of his first issue was restrained

but pointed. Of one anonymous critic, he wrote that if he "has a proper sense of fairness in his composition, he will unmask before committing any more backbiting of this sort"; of another critic, he wrote, "Mr. Stoddard is a man of intensely negative nature, who cannot bear the positive philosophy and definite dogmatism of *The Conservative*, and who must therefore be excused for his slighting allusions. However, he is a little premature in predicting the evolution of *The Conservative* into a careless writer of his own type." Of yet another critic, he held: "Rheinart Kleiner is a critic whose keenest censure may be accepted without resentment, since his honest and serious attitude raises him far above the suspicion of petty teasing and attempted cynicism." After thus disposing of his critics, Lovecraft concluded:

"It has been asserted by some biographers, that the poet Keats 'died of an article.' If, however, the contemporaries of *The Conservative* hope thus to kill off the object of their censure, they sadly mistake their man. As Horace hath it:

" '*Fragili quaerens illidere dentem,
Offendet solido*'.

"To his favourable reviewers, *The Conservative* must express his sincerest gratitude. They have received in a truly fraternal and wisely lenient fashion the first production of a beginner, and have given him that wholesome stimulation without which the present and future issues would never have appeared. That he may improve under their kindly and encouraging suggestions, and at length become really worthy of their generous commendation, is *The Conservative's* cherished ambition."

The same issue of the magazine, however, contained an editorial which portrayed Lovecraft as an ultra-conservative of the most reactionary kind, as a wilful Anglophile, a racially-prejudiced, flag-waving militarist, whose credos, as set forth in *In a Major Key* were destined to undergo some major transformations before very many more years had passed. Here were betrayed the conclusions to which a young man, largely self-educated, living the life of a semi-invalid and solitary, had

come without the mellowing which was to take place at the hands of such friends as Samuel Loveman, Frank Belknap Long, Mrs. Sonia Greene (for some years his wife), Reinhart Kleiner, and others of the Kalem Klub and the later Lovecraft circle of young writers.

"It was lately the good fortune of *The Conservative* to receive from The Blue Pencil Club a pamphlet entitled *In a Minor Key*, whose phenomenal excellence furnishes emphatic evidence that the old National still retains some members who would have done it credit even in its palmiest days. But great as may be the literary merit of the publication, its astonishing radicalism of thought cannot but arouse an overwhelming chorus of opposition from the saner elements in amateur journalism.

"Charles D. Isaacson, the animating essence of the publication, is a character of remarkable quality. Descended from the race that produced a Mendelssohn, he is himself a musician of no ordinary talent, whilst as a man of literature he is worthy of comparison with his co-religionists Moses Mendez and Isaac D'Israeli. But the very spirituality which gives elevation to the Semitic mind, partially unfits it for the consideration of tastes and trends in Aryan thought and writings, hence it is not surprising that he is a radical of the extremest sort.

"From an ordinary man, the acclamation of degraded Walt Whitman as the 'Greatest American Thinker' would come as an insult to the American mind, yet with Mr. Isaacson one may but respectfully dissent. Penetrating and forgetting the unspeakable grossness and wildness of the erratic bard, our author seizes on the one spark of truth within, and magnifies it till it becomes for him the whole Whitman. The Conservative, in speaking for the sounder faction of American taste, is impelled to give here his own lines on Whitman, written several years ago as part of an essay on the modern poets:

"Behold great *Whitman*, whose licentious line
Delights the rake, and warms the souls of swine.
Whose fever'd fancy shuns the measur'd pace,
And copies Ovid's filth without his grace.
In his rough brain a genius might have grown,
Had he not sought to play the brute alone;

But void of shame, he let his wit run wild,
And liv'd and wrote as Adam's bestial child.
Averse to culture, strange to humankind,
He never knew the pleasures of the mind.
Scorning the pure, the delicate, the clean,
His joys were sordid, and his morals mean.
Through his gross thoughts a native vigour ran,
From which he deem'd himself the perfect man:
But want of decency his rank decreas'd,
And sunk him to the level of the beast.
Would that his Muse had dy'd before her birth,
Nor spread such foul corruption o'er the earth.

"Mr. Isaacson's views on racial prejudice, as outlined in his *Minor Key*, are too subjective to be impartial. He has perhaps resented the more or less open aversion to the children of Israel which has ever pervaded Christendom, yet a man of his perspicuity should be able to distinguish this illiberal feeling, a religious and social animosity of one white race toward another white and equally intellectual race, from the natural and scientifically just sentiment which keeps the African black from contaminating the Caucasian population of the United States. The negro is fundamentally the biological inferior of all White and even Mongolian races, and the Northern people must occasionally be reminded of the danger which they incur in admitting him too freely to the privileges of society and government.

"Mr. Isaacson's protest is directed specifically against a widely advertised motion picture, *The Birth of a Nation*, which is said to furnish a remarkable insight into the methods of the Ku-Klux-Klan, that noble but much maligned band of Southerners who saved half of our country from destruction at the close of the Civil War. The Conservative has not yet witnessed the picture in question, but he has seen both in literary and dramatic form *The Clansman*, that stirring, though crude and melodramatic story by Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr., on which *The Birth of a Nation* is based, and has likewise made a close historical study of the Ku-Klux-Klan, finding as a result of his research nothing but Honour, Chivalry, and Patriotism in the activities of the Invisible Empire. The Klan merely did for the people what the law refused to do, removing

the ballot from unfit hands and restoring to the victims of political vindictiveness their natural rights. The alleged lawbreaking of the Klan was committed only by irresponsible miscreants, who, after the dissolution of the Order by its Grand Wizard, Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, used its weird masks and terrifying costumes to veil their unorganised villainies.

"Race prejudice is a gift of Nature, intended to preserve in purity the various divisions of mankind which the ages have evolved. In comparing this essential instinct of man with political, religious, and national prejudices, Mr. Isaacson commits a serious error of logic.

"The Conservative dislikes strong language, but he feels that he is not exceeding the bounds of propriety in asserting that the publication of the article entitled *The Greater Courage* is a crime which in a native American of Aryan blood would be deserving of severe legal punishment. This appeal to the people to refuse military service when summoned to their flag is an outrageous attack on the lofty principles of patriotism which have turned this country from a savage wilderness to a mighty band of states; a slur on the honour of our countrymen, who from the time of King Philip's War to the present have been willing to sacrifice their lives for the preservation of their families, their nation, and their institutions. Mr. Isaacson, however, must be excused for his words, since some of his phrases show quite clearly that he is only following the common anarchical fallacy, believing that wars are forced upon the masses by tyrannical rulers. This belief, extremely popular a few months ago, has received a rude blow through the acts of the Italian people in forcing their reluctant government to join the Allies. The socialistic delusion becomes ridiculous when its precepts are thus boldly reversed by facts. Bryan is cut of the way at last, and in spite of Mr. Isaacson and his hyphenated fellow-pacifists, the real American people, the descendants of Virginian and New England Christian Protestant colonists, will remain ever faithful to the Stars and Stripes, even though forced to meet enemies at home as well as abroad."

The editorial, for all its violent bias, served as a springboard for Lovecraft's opinions in the wider fields of literary and political opinion,

apart from the trifling concerns of amateurdom. By the issue for October, 1916, he took to his pen and had at the proposed unionization of writing men with vigor in *The Proposed Authors' Union*:

"It has been more than once remarked, that there is an intangible bond of kinship betwixt the highest and the humblest elements of the community. Whilst the bourgeois complacently busy themselves with their commonplace, respectable, and unimaginative careers of money-grabbing, the artist and the aristocrat join forces with the ploughman and the peasant in an involuntary mental wave of reaction against the monotony of materialism.

"Never has this kinship been more plainly exhibited than in the present movement among a certain class of American professional authors to band themselves together in an honest workingman's union, and to affiliate with that peerless palladium of industrial independence—the well known and far famed American Federation of Labour. That the professions of the average modern author and of the day-labourer are remarkably alike in intellectual requirements, *The Conservative* has long been convinced. Both types show a certain rough vigour of technique which contrasts very strikingly with the polish of more formal times, and both seem equally pervaded with that spirit of progress and enlightenment which manifests itself in destructiveness. The modern author destroys the English language, whilst the modern strike-loving labourer destroys public and private property.

"Nor can the ambitious author afford to despise the prodigious power to be gained by entrance into the ranks of organised labour. Since our obliging executive Mr. Wilson has established the precedent of national surrender at the least crook of Labour's gnarled finger, it may be justly assumed that the Writers' Brotherhood, as the most voluble and volatile of all the various bodies of workmen, will have complete power over all departments of the government; at least, until March 4, 1917. From this immeasurable height, our professional scribblers may brandish the quill of authority over a submissive Congress, and extort by due process of law every conceivable sort of advantage over the pub-

lishing fraternity, as well as over their less enterprising fellows—the non-union writers. It is barely possible that a strike of authors might be slightly less effective as a threat, than a strike of railway men; but so fond is our present idealistic executive of the beauties of rhetoric, that he would without doubt do much for the cause of the words.

"The place of literary radicals and imagist 'poets' in this Utopian scheme demands grave consideration. Since the trade union movement requires at least an elementary amount of intelligence in its adherents, and is applied mainly to SKILLED labour; these deserving iconoclasts of the Amy Lowell school would seem to be left, Othello-like, without an occupation. But a moment's reflection serves to dissolve the difficulty. Here, indeed, is ideal material for that vague and awe-inspiring industrial 'Mano Nera' known as the 'I.W.W.'! The benefits of such a coalition of 'vers-libristes' and anarchists are patent to all. Since, save for its law and window breaking, the I.W.W. is in a condition of perpetual idleness, its leaders being generally out on strike, or out on bail; its imagistical recruits would naturally be constrained to follow the general example, inaugurating amongst themselves a sympathetic 'walkout,' and thereby delivering the public ear and the editorial waste-basket from the annoyance of their effusions.

"It is quite probable that the Brotherhood of Simplified Spellers would have to be created separately from both the American Federation of Labour and the I.W.W. Certain members of these learned societies, including expert hod-carriers and pick and shovel engineers, find difficulty enough with our language as now written, and could not possibly tolerate the presence of those reformers who are adding variability to its other faults.

"The burning question of contemporary literature apparently concerns the eight-hour day for historians and the minimum wage for sonneteers. These things, and countless others which fret the artistic brain, could easily be solved by unionism. For instance: shall poets be paid by the hour or by the line? The one system discriminates unjustly against such careful workmen as Tom Gray, who consumed seven years on a job only

128 lines long, called *An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*; whilst the other system is too partial to speedy labourers like Sam T. Coleridge and Bob Southey, who, working together, built the poetic drama of *The Fall of Robespierre* between seven o'clock of an evening and the next noon. Also, pay by the line is unfair to writers of Alexandrines like Mike Drayton, while it unduly favours tetrameter bards like Sam Butler and Walt Scott, and leaves a bitter dispute to be settled amongst the ballad-mongers, who sometimes reckon their verses by long lines of fourteen syllables each, and at other times double the number of lines, the long heptameters being split up into alternate lines of eight and six syllables, respectively.

"Amateur journalism, because of its free avenues of expression, would doubtless be suppressed as a hotbed of 'scabs' by the Gomperses and Giovanittis of organised literature. Since it is the prevailing notion of trade unionism that no man has the right to labour without supporting a union and assuming the insignia of industrial blackmail, it may easily be deduced that literary unionism would utterly forbid all thought or expression by outsiders; and that it would, if necessary, resort to violence in cases of stubborn authorship by United members. Whether this violence would consist of stoning or of satire, is as yet uncertain.

"A rather perplexing aspect of the case is afforded by the classic authors. These writers, having lived before the dawn of the New Slavery, are all necessarily non-union, wherefore a man who reads their works must logically be boycotted or placed upon the 'unfair list' by the modern Knights of Grub-Street. The manner of establishing such a boycott would be interesting to determine; but the action will probably never be necessary, since but few up-to-date persons ever touch or peruse classic literature.

"Looking ahead as is the custom of all good radicals, the student may discern an age in which the whole domain of art, literary, pictorial, sculptural, architectural, and musical, will be placed upon a strictly union basis. Indeed, the modern Huns are already proving their efficient progressiveness by destroying the offensively beautiful non-union archi-

itecture of mediaeval religion in Belgium and Northern France. 'Down with the cathedrals, Comrade von Teufel!' cries Bill Hohenzollern, head of the Berlin Butchers' Local No. 1914, 'for they bear not the union label'!

"Concerning trade unionism among authors as a whole, *The Conservative* will not venture here to render an opinion. Be it sufficient for him to say, that it would at least interest him to behold a new folly in a field whose potentialities of fatuity he had thought already exhausted."

Three months later, in the issue for January, 1917, Lovecraft assailed modern art in verse—

Futurist Art

"The skill'd Apelles, by his Prince decreed
To paint with living line the panting steed,
Employ'd in vain each trick and study'd grace,
The likeness of the charger's foam to trace.
At length, in pique, his dripping brush he flung
Against the canvas horse before him hung—
When lo! by chance there spatter'd o'er each part
The painted lather that defy'd his art!
Thus the wild cubists of a later age
With freakish toil their fancies seek to cage,
Though their poor daubings all would nobler be
Should they splash paint as aimlessly as he!"

and at the same time he expressed himself editorially about free verse, in *The Vers Libre Epidemic*:

"The alarming prevalence in contemporary periodicals of 'poetry' without shape, wit, or artistic beauty, has caused no little alarm amongst the true friends of verse, and has given rise to the apprehension that the Aonian art has entered upon a definite phase of decadence. It is the belief of *The Conservative*, however, that the situation is more complex and less basically menacing than it appears from superficial indications.

"It must be remembered that despite the kinship between human fancy and its mode of expression, there is a sharp distinction betwixt radicalism of thought and ideals, and mere radicalism of form; and that while the most notorious specimens of free verse represent complete chaos both

of sense and of structure, the majority of that which gains admission to reputable magazines is decadent only in technique. The poetical fraternity have a new plaything, and all must needs have their hour of sport with it; but the better sort of bards possess too much inherent good taste and sanity to wander far afield. They will soon be writing real verse by accident, in spite of themselves, for they cannot defeat the natural laws of rhythm in poetical expression. Even now, the work of these poets is replete with occasional reactions to normal rhyme and rational metre. Our fellow-amateur Mrs. Renshaw, a superlatively good poet despite radical theories, has recently composed a piece of apparent *vers libre* which is really a well-defined iambic composition with variation in the length of the lines. The innate poet has unwittingly triumphed over the radical theorist! We may, then, safely trust to time to bring the really gifted experimenters within the fold again.

"The second or wholly erratic school of free poets is that represented by Amy Lowell at her worst; a motley horde of hysterical and half-witted rhapsodists whose basic principle is the recording of their momentary moods and psychopathic phenomena in whatever amorphous and meaningless phrases may come to their tongues or pens at the moment of inspirational (or epileptic) seizure. These pitiful creatures are naturally subdivided into various types and schools, each professing certain 'artistic' principles based on the analogy of poetic thought to other aesthetic sources such as form, sound, motion, and colour; but they are fundamentally similar in their utter want of a sense of proportion and of proportionate values. Their complete rejection of the intellectual (an element which they cannot possess to any great extent) is their undoing. Each writes down the sounds or symbols of sounds which drift through his head without the slightest care or knowledge that they may be understood by any other head. The type of impression they receive and record is abnormal, and cannot be transmitted to persons of normal psychology; wherefore there is no true art or even the rudiments of artistic impulse in their effusions. These radicals are animated by mental or emotional processes other than poetic. They are not in any sense poets, and their

work, being wholly alien to poetry, cannot be cited as an indication of poetical decadence. It is rather a type of intellectual and aesthetic decadence of which *vers libre* is only one manifestation. It is the decadence which produces 'futurist' music and 'cubist' painting and sculpture.

"If concrete examples of the two sorts of unmetrical verse—the really poetical and the distinctly abnormal—be needed to illustrate their difference, the reader may compare Richard Aldington's *Inarticulate Grief* (*The Poetry Review*, August, 1916) with the following bit of sober nonsense, written by one of the so-called 'Spectrists' without any idea of humour, but found by *The Conservative* in one of the whimsical paragraphs of a New York 'colyum conductor'; where its complete ridiculousness and irrationality recommended it for citation. Mr. Aldington is a poet of genuine depth and feeling despite his awkward medium; the reader may judge of the following without aid of critic or commentator:

"Her soul was freckled
Like the bald head
Of a jaundiced Jewish banker.
Her fair and featurous face
Writhed like
An Albino boa-constrictor.
She thought she resembled the Mona Lisa.
This demonstrates the futility of thinking.

And the futility of accepting the chronic free 'poets' as serious factors in the literary situation today!"

Succeeding editorials gave evidence of Lovecraft's growing awareness of the outside world. The two—on the League of Nations and bolshevism in the July, 1919 issue were typical of Lovecraft's emergence from the shell of 598 Angell Street, his Providence home.

The League

"Endless is the credulity of the human mind. Having just passed through a period of indescribable devastation caused by the rapacity and treachery of an unwisely trusted nation which caught civilisation un-

armed and unawares, the world purposes once more to adopt a policy of sweet trustfulness, and to place its faith again in those imposing 'scraps of paper' known as treaties and covenants; this time setting up as its bulwark against barbaric inroads a prettily and abstractly conceived 'parliament of man and federation of the world' popularity and semi-officially labelled as 'The League of Nations.' It is to be a very nice and attractive League, we are told; brimful of safeguards against ordinary war, even though somewhat deficient in safeguards against Bolshevism. War, in fact, is to be formally and distinctly prohibited, or at least discouraged; which is of course an absolute guarantee of an immediate millennium of universal peace! Ultimately, as the grave proponents of the scheme condescend to inform us, all nations are to be included in this Utopian circle of friendship and confidence; thus giving us the valued collaboration of our highly honourable German, Turkish, and Bulgarian brothers in the momentous task of governing the future earth-wide Elysium. Verily, it is a pleasing vision.

"But visions generally become dangerous when mistaken for practical possibilities, and the present case is not likely to prove an exception. Since a war-weary and mentally fatigued world is really listening soberly to the vague theorising of league-advocates, it behooves us to awake to full consciousness and examine this roseate rhetoric in the white light of reason, history, and science. To sign any hastily drawn and clumsily patched league covenant without such an examination would be contrary to the traditions of a free and enlightened people.

"Is it indeed true that man has suddenly discovered an infallible panacea for all political ills? Is it indeed certain that a general entanglement of diverse and, in many cases, opposed countries offers a solution of all national difficulties? Have we indeed exchanged the natural laws of mankind and this earth for those of fairyland? To all these queries The Conservative is inclined to venture a negative reply.

"Warfare, whose minimising is the avowed object of the proposed league, is something which can never be abolished altogether. As the natural expression of such inherent human instincts as hate, greed, and combativeness, it must always be reckoned with in some degree. Men

will submit to argument only up to a certain point, beyond which they invariably resort to force, however great the odds against them. Would the league reduce warfare? On the contrary, it would probably have a precisely opposite effect. By multiplying international contacts, it would multiply international animosities; and upon each outbreak of trouble the indirectly involved powers would be less likely to act constitutionally as suppressors, than to divide according to sympathy and previous alignment, and to participate as combatants. Oaths and treaties are worth no more than the honour of those who make them. Set up one league, and it will soon be undermined by a score of clandestine inner leagues.

"What we need as an international safeguard is not a cumbrous and futile federation of miscellaneous nations good and bad, with the independence of each one virtually destroyed; but a simple and practical alliance betwixt those powers such as the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy, which inherit in common the highest ideals, and which possess almost no conflicting interests. Those who hold up our Federal Union as an example of a 'League' in working order would do well to mark the fact that the component states are all of one general type, and not in any way comparable to the widely diverse nations of the globe. Such an alliance, properly armed, would constitute an almost resistless and stable force in world-politics; affording the best defence possible for our civilisation, and providing the best possible guarantee against needless wars.

"Let us cease to think in unrealities, or to mouth such benevolent but empty catch-words as 'disarmament' and 'universal brotherhood.' We are living not in Paradise but on Earth; and will fare best if we marshal the harmonious forces of civilisation in a sensible way for an attainable object, rather than rashly yoke together opposed and dissimilar cultures in the vain hope of realising a fantastic and impossible ideal."

Bolshevism

"The most alarming tendency observable in this age is a growing disregard for the established forces of law and order. Whether or not stimulated by the noxious example of the almost sub-human Russian

rabble, the less intelligent element throughout the world seems animated by a singular viciousness, and exhibits symptoms like those of a herd on the verge of stampeding. Whilst longwinded politicians preach universal peace, long-haired anarchists are preaching a social upheaval which means nothing more or less than a reversion to savagery or mediaeval barbarism. Even in this traditionally orderly nation the number of Bolsheviki, both open and veiled, is considerable enough to require remedial measures. The repeated and unreasonable strikes of important workers, seemingly with the object of indiscriminate extortion rather than rational wage increase, constitute a menace which should be checked.

"To a certain extent, our government will probably meet these conditions with legislation affecting seditious speech and treasonable acts; but if a permanent cure is to be accomplished, something deeper and more educational will be needed. It will require propaganda to combat propaganda. The present agitation undoubtedly arises from false belief in the possibility of a radically altered social order. The workers who strike, and the shouters who incite to crime, are obviously possessed of the notion that the property of the wealthy could practicably be shared with them; that even if they were to seize the things they covet, they could continue the enjoyment of civilised existence and of protection against violence.

"We need a new Menenius Agrippa to proclaim and demonstrate widely the total fallacy of such an illusion. Our present social order, whilst capable of some degree of liberalisation, is the product of the natural development of human relations. It is not ideal, nor could anything on earth be ideal—but it is inevitable. Just as long as some men are more intelligent than others, so long will there be inequality of wealth. The type of persons who indulge in strikes and socialism seem never to realise how much they depend on the brains of their hated 'economic masters.' They do not reflect that if they were to seize the factories and governments as they desire, they would be totally powerless to run them. The lawless I.W.W. sometimes boasts of its prospective

ability to overthrow orderly government and substitute a sanguinary reign of the so-called 'proletariat.' Perhaps such a catastrophe will come, just as the Russian catastrophe came; but how little will the blind anarchists gain therefrom! With the intelligent element removed, the rabble will use up the resources of civilisation without being able to produce more; cities and public works will fall into decay, and a new barbarism arise, out of which will spring in time the natural chieftains who will constitute the 'masters' of another era of capitalism. Far better that the impressionable and inflammable masses be taught these things before they embark upon a futile revolution which will ruin all civilisation, themselves included, without helping anyone."

The last two issues of the magazine, curiously, came full circle. In the issue for March, 1923, Lovecraft gave direct intimation of his cognizance of change in his world when he wrote editorially, "In the world around, the spectator beholds a multitude of mutations; as younger minds arise to impugn the values and discard the manners of former days. With such bold adventurers *The Conservative* will contend less bitterly than of yore, for with age he hath grown mindful of the spirit of originality; yet for himself he will crave the reciprocal indulgence of his juniors, and assert on their own ground of individuality the right to cling to his accustom'd periwig and small-clothes. Whilst they, in hectic style, dissect the smallest particles of thought and invade the remotest recesses of consciousness; it may perhaps be permitted to an old gentleman to view the world as a natural whole without the microscope of modernity, and to express himself in a fashion which, if stilted, is scarce more so than the fashions of youth with their misused words and pertly artificial affectations." Thus Lovecraft, at thirty-three.

In the same issue, he held forth at length about T. S. Eliot and *The Waste Land* in *Rudis Indigestaque Moles*:

"*The Conservative*, observing the complacent indifference of most amateurs toward the present state of literature and general aesthetics, hath frequently wondered how acute be their realisation of just what is taking place. The average amateur paper, when it can spare the space

from subjects so titanic as politics, conventions and personalities, is unique in its allegiance to the accepted art and literature of the past; and in its happy oblivion regarding the menaces offered by the present and future. To read such a paper one would gather that Tennyson and Longfellow are still taken seriously as poets, and that the sentiments and sentimentalities of our fathers are still capable of awakening the Muse and forming the basis of future works of art. A protest against this species of myopia was some time ago uttered by one of our ultra-radicals; but lost force because of its origin and form. Perhaps it would not be improper for a conservative, whose sympathy with extreme manifestations is little enough, to call renewed attention to the situation.

"Do our members realise that the progress of science within the last half-century has introduced conceptions of man, the world, and the universe which make hollow and ridiculous an appreciable proportion of all the great literature of the past? Art, to be great, must be founded on human emotions of much strength; such as come from warm instincts and firm beliefs. Science having so greatly altered our view of the universe and the beliefs attendant upon that view, we are now confronted by an important shifting of values in every branch of art where belief is concerned. The old heroics, pieties and sentimentalities are dead amongst the sophisticated; and even some of our appreciations of natural beauty are threatened. Just how expansive is this threat, we do not know; and The Conservative hopes fervently that the final devastated area will be comparatively narrow; but in any case startling developments are inevitable.

"A glance at the serious magazine discussion of Mr. T. S. Eliot's disjointed and incoherent 'poem' called *The Waste Land*, in the November *Dial*, should be enough to convince the most unimpressionable of the true state of affairs. We here behold a practically meaningless collection of phrases, learned allusions, quotations, slang, and scraps in general; offered to the public (whether or not as a hoax) as something justified by our modern mind with its recent comprehension of its own chaotic triviality and disorganisation. And we behold that public, or a considerable part of it, receiving this hilarious melange as something

vital and typical; as 'a poem of profound significance,' to quote its sponsors.

"To reduce the situation to its baldest terms, man has suddenly discovered that all his high sentiments, values, and aspirations are mere illusions caused by physiological processes within himself, and of no significance whatsoever in an infinite and purposeless cosmos. He has discovered that most of his acts spring from hidden causes remote from the ones hitherto honoured by tradition, and that his so-called 'soul' is merely (as one critic puts it) a rag-bag of unrelated odds and ends. And having made these discoveries, he does not know what to do about it; but compromises on a literature of analysis, chaos, and ironic contrast.

"What will come of it? This we cannot say; but certainly, great alterations are due amongst the informed. European culture has reached the Alexandrian stage of effeteness, and we probably cannot hope for anything better than diverging streams of barren intellectualism and of amorphous, passionate art founded on primal instincts rather than delicate emotions. The emotions will be minutely analysed and laughed at; the instincts will be glorified and wallowed in. The hope of art, paradoxically enough, lies in the ability of future generations not to be too well informed; to be able, at least, to create certain artificial limitations of consciousness and enjoy a gently whimsical repetition and variation of the traditional images and themes, whose decorative beauty and quaintness can never be wholly negligible to the sensitive taste. It is, for example, hardly possible that moonlight on a marble temple, or twilight in an old garden in spring, can ever be other than beautiful in our eyes. Bourgeois and plebeian literature, of course, will undoubtedly go on without change; for the thoughts of the great majority are rarely affected by the subtleties of progress. The Edgar A. Guests are secure in their unassuming niches. But it is only by the higher strata that we can judge a literature in its historic perspective, so that the permanent residuum of folk or ballad aesthetics does not figure in the problem. Never before, it is interesting to note, have the popular and the sophisticated types of literature been so widely divergent as at present.

"Meanwhile it is singular that so few echoes of the prevailing

turbulence should have reached our amateur press. Shall we remain comfortably cloistered with our Milton and Wordsworth, never again to know the amusing buzzing of such quaint irritants as *Les Mouches Fantastiques*? The Conservative confesses himself curious to know what other amateur authors and editors think of *The Waste Land* and its bizarre analogues!"

But in the last issue, for July, 1923, Lovecraft confined himself editorially to the need for enlightened critical standards in amateurdom—a familiar theme. In his final issue, The Conservative dealt at greater length and more cogently with the problem.

"A desperate need of amateurdom today is an enlightened critical standard which shall save us from devotion to false, conventional, and superficial values, and blindness to all that is sincere, vital, penetrating, or genuinely ecstatic in art. The relative rarity of young blood has begun to give us a perilously Philistine bias, so that the path of the uncompromising artist in our midst is much thornier than it should be. These are times when a flash of subtle emotion or a colourful appeal to obscure and fantastic recesses of the imagination is likely to evoke a superior titter if the words sound in the least extravagant or unfamiliar to a mind bred on Dickens or the *Saturday Evening Post*. Good homely common sense, no doubt, but sadly disastrous to amateur literature.

"It is time, The Conservative believes, definitely to challenge the sterile and exhausted Victorian ideal which blighted Anglo-Saxon culture for three quarters of a century and produced a milky 'poetry' of shopworn sentimentalities and puffy platitudes; a dull-grey prose fiction of misplaced didacticism and insipid artificiality; an appallingly hideous system of formal manners, costume, and decoration; and worst of all, an artistically blasphemous architecture whose uninspired nondescriptness transcends tolerance, comprehension, and profanity alike.

"These reflections are elicited by the urbane warfare of Philistine and Grecian so opportunely precipitated by Mr. Michael White's critique of Mr. Samuel Loveman's poetry. Mr. White, taking his stand with the hard-headed and condemning an artist who employs such strange ma-

terials as ecstasy or imagination, has naturally aroused the opposition of certain ardent fantaisistes like Mr. Frank Belknap Long, Jr., whose impressionistic reply appeared in these columns. And now we find Mr. Long the recipient of some priceless comic-supplement sarcasm from the admirers of Mr. White, a typical Boston group to whom New England's Puritan heritage has denied that touch of ethereal madness which makes for the creation and appreciation of universal, fundamental art.

"Just what do these mild hostilities signify? Should we after all denounce our Eminent Victorians merely because of their support of the critic who classifies Macaulay, Carlisle, (sic) Emerson, and Shaw as 'great poets', attributes unique limitations to the word *chorus*, and sits stolid in the beams of imaginative art? Is this protest of humorous, sensible clearness against symbolic, colorful intensity indeed a mark of Victorian obtuseness instead of a sane defense of tradition in the face of chaotic innovation? Certainly the position of Mr. White's circle is flawless if we are to accept art as an affair of the external intellect and commonplace, unanalysed emotions alone. The Conservative dissents only because he believes with most of the contemporary world that the actual foundations of art differ widely from those which the prim nineteenth century took for granted.

"What is art but a matter of impressions, of pictures, emotions, and symmetrical sensations? It must have poignancy and beauty, but nothing else counts. It may or may not have coherence. If concerned with large externals or simple fancies, or produced in a simple age, it is likely to be of a clear and continuous pattern; but if concerned with individual reactions to life in a complex and analytical age, as most modern art is, it tends to break up into detached transcripts of hidden sensation and offer a loosely joined fabric which demands from the spectator a discriminating duplication of the artist's mood. The Philistine clamour for a literature of plain statement and superficial theme loses force when we assign to literature—especially poetry—its proper place in aesthetics, and compare it to such modes of expression as music and architecture, which do not speak in the language of primers.

"The Conservative is no convert to Dadism. Nothing, on the contrary, seems more certain to him than that the bulk of radical prose and verse represents merely the extravagant extreme of a tendency whose truly artistic application is vastly more limited. Traces of this tendency, whereby pictorial methods are used, and words and images employed without conventional connexions to excite sensations, may be found throughout literature; especially in Keats, William Blake, and the French symbolists. This broader conception of art does not outrage any eternal tradition, but honours all creations of the past or present which can show genuine ecstatic fire and a glamour not tawdrily founded on utterly commonplace emotions.

"Thus the shrill laughter of the thin-blooded literalist at the ecstatic artist is founded mainly on one-sidedness and conventionality of background; the scoffer being nearly always a follower of an obsolete tradition, steeped in the orthodox English literature of the middle nineteenth century rather than immersed in the universal stream which knows neither time nor country. Such a sage, like the proverbial *homo unius libri*, may prove a formidable and witty antagonist; but his parochial limitations obviously unfit him for anything like an authoritative pronouncement on laws touching the entire human spirit. '*Les esprits mediocres*,' says La Rochefoucauld, '*condamnent d'ordinaire tout ce qui passe leur partiee*.' Before intelligently approaching a work of art a critic must absorb at least the rudiments of the background from which it was developed—which takes us back to the problem of dealing with the Victorian scolding and giggling which bid fair to discourage sincere aesthetic endeavor in amateur journalism.

"The Conservative would unassumingly urge a slight course of literary research upon those critics who are hurling the English 19th century in our faces with so much gusto, finality, and drollery. Without wishing to emulate their own fetching pageantry of mighty names across the learned page, he would bid them consider such titans as Walter Pater, Lafcadio Hearn, Arthur Symons, Arthur Machen, Wilde, Gautier, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarme, Laforgue, D'An-

nunzio, or Croce—titans about whom much may be learnt even through reviews. Once really aware of the existence of this wider field, and of the extent to which it has influenced contemporary ideas of art, our conscientious Philistines could not but enlarge their horizons of tolerance. How much they might actually understand or sympathise, is a temperamental matter alien to the problem."

The issue is concluded with a curious note on laughter as an art for the discriminating.

"Among the interesting problems raised by the current Philistine-Grecian controversy in amateurdom, is one which both concerns and contains humor—the problem of when and when not to laugh in dissecting an unusual literary production seriously offered by an author whose general achievements set him definitely above the throng of the inept and the extravagant. To many, and especially to the older critics, the answer would appear farcially simple; and would involve an amused insistence on the right of a Cheshire cat to exercise his hereditary prerogative on all occasions, thus establishing the inference that possible ludicrousness in writing, if *unintentional*, is always *unconscious*, and therefore a fatal artistic defect.

"This ordinary attitude is at first sight of such weight that the merest questioner exposes himself to a share of its possessors' cachinnations. Examples of really hilarious gravity are so prevalent that their recollection overshadows all the nuances of the ultimate problem. But a dispassionate view, free from the glare of the obvious, reveals one important modifying consideration in the fact that comicality always depends wholly on the system of thought and values held by the perceiver; that, in short, ridiculousness is *relative*, and conditioned by the truth, inflexibility, or paramountcy of certain common ideas which are absolute to the multitude yet merely virtual to the closer inquirer. Intelligence and education, as they open new fields of risibility, close old ones; so that the laughing-stock of one stage of culture is often the gospel of the next, and vice versa.

"Remembering these things as we turn to literary criticism, we per-

ceive the difficulty of laying down permanent laws of laughter in an age when all standards are plastic. Much of the serious and accepted literature of the past, especially where human motives and cosmic purposes are involved, is broadly comical to the mind informed in contemporary science and philosophy; and much in modern writing, where the conceptions touch on the subjective and imaginary instead of the real world, is screamingly funny to the mind accustomed to nothing but literal reality and inherited beliefs.

"Thus it would seem wise to look before you laugh. A subtle writer's imagery often takes a turn which has its conceivably comic side, yet which is not only admissible but sometimes powerfully original when viewed as part of a fabric as exotic, individual, subjective, and essentially decorative as the pictured phantasmata of Sime or Beardsley. Such an artist is not unconscious of the humorous interpretation which prosaic literalism may give his occasional bizarrerie—often he laughs himself—but he retains his quaintly carved Buddhas and Sivas just as zealously, knowing that they fit his far, strange realm of alien moonlight and incense-perfumed dream, however odd or ludicrous they may appear in the workaday sunshine of Main Street.

"Far be it from *The Conservative* to decry humour in amateur journalism. High Pegana knows how badly we need the genuine article! But are there not times when its judicious discipline augments our power of creation and appreciation in certain fields? Who will say that Lord Dunsany's delicate arabesque touch has not suffered as his wit has become less and less detached from it, or that Arthur Machen is not the stronger for the childlike naivete of his outlook on the dream-world? And is it not possible that some of the Philistine hyperticklishness at unaccustomed whimsies springs from a lack of that deeper and more pervasive humour which sees in all human life and effort an ironic comedy? Verily, laughter is an art for the discriminating!"

Thus ended Lovecraft's lone venture into amateurdom. Prior to *The Conservative* he had "publish'd" only a manuscript "paper" for amateur astronomers—the work of a lad in his early teens; thereafter he contented himself with contributions to various amateur papers, not

the least of them being his scholarly essay, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, originally written in 1927 for W. Paul Cook's *The Recluse*. The thirteen issues of *The Conservative* are of interest to the Lovecraft scholar and enthusiast; one would have liked to see it carried on into the 1930's, to have the further evidence of the evolution of Lovecraft from the reactionary conservative into a surprisingly far-sighted liberal, as is adequately shown in his voluminous letters. *The Conservative* represented a labor of love, beyond doubt; but the exigencies of making a living in the dreary monotony of revising countless depressingly minor manuscripts by amateur and would-be poets and authors imposed a greater necessity upon Lovecraft and put an end to his magazine.

The Man Who Was Lovecraft

By E. HOFFMANN PRICE

MY FIRST SIGHT of HPL was in the lobby of a third class hotel on St. Charles Street, in New Orleans, early in June of 1932. He wore a baggy and threadbare suit, snuff-colored, and neatly patched in several places. After greetings, he made a remark about having just finished laundering a shirt in his room. Seeing New Orleans or any other place that caught his fancy was far more important to him than anything beyond the bare necessities of living. In that respect at least, this was a man I could understand.

Some years previous, I had seen snapshots of Lovecraft. These had prepared me for a man of striking appearance, which he was. However, the pictures had represented the whites of his eyes as unusually conspicuous, notably in the lower portion. Whether this was a trick of the camera, or whether in earlier years there had actually been such an odd expression, I can not say. The eyes I saw were dark brown, animated, intense, and entirely normal, without any of the weirdness I had expected.

For the rest, he carried himself with enough of a slouch to make me underestimate his height as well as the breadth of his shoulders. His face was thin and narrow, longish, with long chin and jaw. He walked with a quick stride. His speech was quick and inclined to jerkiness. It was as though his body was hard put to it to keep up with the agility of his mind. This is my impression of those first few moments of skirting Lafayette Square, as we made for the Vieux Carré, where I lived. In view of subsequent meetings, I am inclined to believe that the mannerisms I noted were the result of nervousness in dealing with a stranger, either shyness, or from his effort to set aside habitual reserve and be cordial as he felt that the occasion warranted.

I was somewhat tense myself, not so much from the prospect of going

to meet a fabulous character pictured as having uncanny eyes, as from the yarns I had heard: to wit, that he was an insufferably straight-laced Puritan, and that one had to guard one's speech and especially avoid any reference to drinking or habits which he deemed vices. But after a moment or so, I knew that this was neither a ghoul nor a blue-nose, but a friendly and human person, despite his seeming to be an animated dictionary.

He was not pompous, and he was not pretentious—quite the contrary. He merely had a knack of using formal and academic diction for the most casual remark. We had not walked a block before I realized that no other way of speech could be truly natural for HPL. Had he used locutions less stilted, and taken to speaking as others did, *that* would have been an affectation.

Abruptly, the strangeness vanished. It was as though I had known and liked him for a long time. It was good to be in his stimulating company, pleasant and refreshing: a sound, solid person, first and always human, and just incidentally, a non-stock model. I had never before met the like, and I knew that not even a remotely similar personality existed.

As a matter of courtesy, I had hidden some five cases of home brew, (this was 1932) and a keg of raisin wine. His taste for coffee simplified the refreshment problem. Rather than "taste"—passion. He drank cup after cup, and I made pot after pot. Into each cup he stirred four heaping spoonsful of sugar. For twenty-eight consecutive hours during which we chatted at a giddy tempo, he drank coffee.

And he ate. His long face glowed when I mentioned the big kettle of chile con carne I'd cooked the day before his unexpected arrival. There were other delicacies in the refrigerator, but at the mention of chile, he unleashed a classical allusion in which "nectar" and "ambrosia" featured, and went on to say that the more highly spiced a dish, the better. It was good to see him prove his words, and when I mentioned my curry recipe, he said that he had but one regret—not even he, with all his love of spices (from the Indies, of course!), could make room for a pot of curry so soon after a chile debauch.

HPL is famed as an ice-cream eater, and of championship stature. I

remember him as one whose day was brightened by dishes seasoned with coriander, ginger, cardamon, fenugreek, cumin, orégano and whatsoever else the locker contained. The recital of the list so aroused his enthusiasm that then and there we planned that if ever I visited him in Province, I would build an East Indian curry.

Twenty-eight hours we gabbled, swapping ideas, kicking fancies back and forth, topping each other's whimsies. He had an enormous enthusiasm for new experience: of sight, of sound, of word pattern, of idea pattern. I have met in all my time only one or two others who approached him in what I call "mental greed." A glutton for words, ideas, thoughts. He elaborated, combined, distilled, and at a machine gun tempo.

He neither smoked nor drank, and, judging from all his conversation and letters, women did not exist as far as he was concerned. But excepting these, his tastes and interests approached the universal.

Jolly nonsense, jolly gossip, travel talk—and finally, a debate about one of my first professionally written stories *Tarbis of the Lake*. There was a magnificent hair splitting wrangle over each comma. He felt that an element of coincidence entered into the meeting of the hero and the mysterious Tarbis. I ended by digging up the guide book to Lourdes and the surrounding province, which I had visited in 1919. The legend of Tarbis, the Ethiopian princess, who, jilted by Moses, set sail for France, fascinated him. He admitted that in representing Tarbis as Egyptian, I was making only a necessary concession to the American tendency to regard an Ethiopian as identical with the Negro of our Southern States. He insisted that the entire background should be presented, and while he did not put it in so many words, I knew that he had in mind a treatment comparable to that deliberate and generous development characteristic of his Arkham stories.

The debate gave him a chance to display all his sharpness of wit, his understanding of story structure, his command of language, his amazing knowledge of all manner of things. He was in his glory, having an appreciative audience and sparring partner. So was I. Asking a guest to read and criticize a manuscript is an imposition. The evil I did that night must have been held to my account, for in the years which

followed, there were many who avenged HPL! But I could not resist the temptation to ask him to vivisect one of my first professional pieces, done after eight years of hobby writing, eight years of having HPL constantly in mind as one of the topflight performers in my field. He seemed happy to oblige, and perhaps considered himself well repaid in that the task had as its by-product this, that he met something new—the legend of Tarbis, an obscure tradition whereof not even he had ever before heard!

During these twenty-eight hours, some of the Vieux Carré crowd came in, people I was sure he would deem lewd, bawdy, and sottish. They came up gaily, and with bottles. To sidetrack this outrage, as I feared he would consider it, would have been awkward, and in a sense, a belittlement rather than a mark of consideration to my guest of honor. I feared, too, that the crowd would at the best be boresome to a person of HPL's tastes and background, if not offensive.

The way it turned out, my unspoken qualms were an injustice to the man. He not only met the visitors with a fine good fellowship and cordiality which belied all the reports I had heard of his intolerance in some respects, but he met them more than half way. And when he took the floor, they listened to this odd, this unique, this bookish, this pedantic Puritan from Providence. He held their attention from the first. His assurance and poise relieved and delighted me. He was quite un-selfconscious. He did not in any way live up to my first impression; I feared that he might become nervous and on edge when meeting strangers.

This was an evening of many phases. One of my favorite HPL stories was, and still is, *The Silver Key*. In telling him of the pleasure I had had in rereading it, I suggested a sequel to account for Randolph Carter's doings after his disappearance. My interest in his story stimulated him, and his appreciative response in turn stimulated me, so that before the session was over, we had seriously resolved to undertake the task. Some months later, I wrote a six thousand word first draft.

HPL courteously applauded, and then literally took pen in hand. He mailed me a 14,000 word elaboration, in the Lovecraft manner, of

what I had sent him. I had bogged down, of course. The idea of doing a sequel to one of his stories was more fantastic than any fantasy he has ever written. When I deciphered his manuscript, I estimated that he had left unchanged fewer than fifty of my original words: one passage which he considered to be not only rich and colorful in its own right, but also compatible with the style of his own composition. He was of course right in discarding all but the basic outline. I could only marvel that he had made so much of my inadequate and bungling start. What I had done, in effect, was to prod him, by that start, into creating something. Today, I like to tell myself that that one short passage of mine which he incorporated into the script must have been good; and that without doubt, I fared better than any of those many others whose botched beginnings he rewrote bodily.

I have often been told that *Through the Gates of the Silver Key* is the only story in which H. P. Lovecraft shared the byline with another writer; that in every other instance, he either permitted or demanded that the initiator of the story publish it as his own work.

HPL commemorated, in that story, our twenty-eight hours of getting acquainted. The wrought-iron censers he mentions in the opening of the novelette were in my apartment at 305 Royal Street; so also the Adam fireplace, and the antique Boukhara and Persian carpets hanging on the walls.

We had a lot of fun in our collaboration. In grandiose whimsy, we decided that we'd do many collaborations, to capitalize on what he called my speed of composition. Instead of sharing the byline, we would create a new fiction star: Etienne Marmaduke de Marigny, whose output would, conservatively estimated, amount to a million words a month. We designed Moorish palaces, custom built cars, and all manner of luxuries for Etienne Marmaduke de Marigny to buy with his prodigious income, such as an automatic ice-cream freezer and dispenser offering a choice of two thousand flavors, and a wine cellar of equal versatility. HPL was broadminded, more so than earlier accounts could have had him. I readily consented to excluding an oyster bar and anything else

pertaining to seafood. Out of deference to HPL's sensibilities, I skipped concubines entirely.

Today, Etienne Marmaduke de Marigny would have no problem at all spending what remained of his income, after Federal and other taxes. And having certain occult gifts, Etienne wisely refrained from writing any fiction at all. This was typical of HPL's whimsies. I think he must have had a Paul Bunyan touch, as well as an eighteenth century complex.

The following year, HPL and I met in Providence, at 66 College Street. His aunt, Mrs. Gamwell, was then in the hospital, so that there was no one to persuade us to keep sane hours. My recollection is that this time, we were on the go for thirty-four hours. Years have blurred the outlines of that visit which began July 4, 1933.

Harry Brobst, interne at a local madhouse, joined us, and we went to the cemetery just off Benefit Street, around four in the morning. The churchyard, at the foot of a short, steep descent, was dramatically lighted—whether by full moon or nearby streetlights, I do not remember. I recollect only that HPL was monologuing about Edgar Allan Poe, and Mrs. Helen Whitman he had courted; and here was the lady's house. And then—

Of a sudden, and as though HPL's gesture had made it materialize, I was looking into a churchyard, and it seemed, was almost in it. It could have been a scene from one of his stories. In that light, and perhaps because of the sudden revelation, it seemed something that could not belong to this earth. A graveyard as such is certainly the most hackneyed of all so-called eerie locales: this had a shocking, a dramatic quality that transcended whatever associational force a cemetery may have. With perfect showmanship, HPL had saved that spectacle until last and then, with perfect timing offered it to prove that Providence had something all its own.

The following day, I made East Indian curry. Harry Brobst came over with six bottles of beer. This seemed daring, until I learned the fine distinctions HPL made. Beer was now legal. We were not violating the law of the land, he asserted by way of justifying his change of front. We

drank with his blessing, though he declined to take a glass with us.

"And what," he asked, out of scientific curiosity, "are you going to do with so *much* of it?"

"Drink it," said Brobst. "Only three bottles a-piece."

I'll never forget HPL's look of utter incredulity. If he'd been a Moslem, he'd surely have exclaimed, "*Mashallah!* Behold the wonders and marvels of Allah's creation." Had I casually announced that I was about to evoke my familiar spirit, HPL would have been courteously attentive, but could hardly have displayed astonishment or disbelief. And he watched us with unconcealed curiosity, and with a touch of apprehension, as we drank three bottles a-piece. I'm sure he made a detailed entry in his journal to record this, to him, unusual feat.

He relished the East Indian curry, with lamb and rice. For months we had discussed the dish by mail. "Now, there is the kind for women and children, and for the great American public—a pallid, gutless, quite innocuous sauce. Then there is the blighting, blasting, searing curry in the true Indian fashion. One drop of it has been known to draw blisters from a Cordovan boot. . . ." And *that* was the kind HPL craved. He stood by as I blended it, and he sampled from time to time as it simmered on the range.

"More chemicals and acids?" I'd ask him.

"Mmm . . . this is savory, and by no means lacking in fire, but it could be more vigorous."

When he agreed that it was about right, I admitted that while I had eaten hotter curry in my time, this was certainly strong enough.

That he loathed seafood is well known. Nevertheless, he took me to Pawtuxet for the famous steamed clam dinner. Apparently no house in Rhode Island offered any as good. After ordering for me, and making sure that I'd not have the tourist grade foisted on me, he said, "While you are devouring that *God-damned* stuff, I shall cross the street and eat a sandwich. Please excuse me."

The quote is accurate. HPL's plain "damns" were reserved for state occasions. It was only in the face of that supreme horror, a man about to eat a steamed clam, that he could achieve blasphemy. I have never heard

of any other instance of his having gone to such an extreme of profanity.

When, finally on the verge of perishing for lack of sleep, I turned in for a few hours rest, I felt guilty for having kept him up so long. I'd overdone a good thing, and imposed on a perfect host. Several hours later, I was reassured when he tapped at my door. He'd been sitting up, writing letters and making entries in his journal, he said, until the arrival of W. Paul Cook, who was en route to New York. "I hope you slept well," he continued, "Cook expressed a desire to meet you."

At the moment, I valued sleep more than I would have a chance to witness the burning of Rome or a review of the Golden Horde, and devil take W. Paul Cook, whoever he might be! But I went to meet the visitor, and I was glad that I did. Until his death, somewhat more than a year ago, I kept in touch with Cook, though we met only that once, and for little more than an hour. I think that what held us together was the memory of HPL, though my interest in *The Ghost* gave our correspondence a vitality of its own.

There are parts of Rhode Island which have neither bus nor inter-urban railway service. When I learned of this, I insisted that we should visit these parts in my Model A—"Great Juggernaut," as HPL named the car. He was diffident about permitting me to serve his convenience, and tried to talk the idea down, yet I knew that once he overcame his scruples against what he termed reversing the roles of host and guest, he keenly anticipated seeing corners of Rhode Island which he had never visited.

He was a good guide. Only once or twice did we have to stop and ask our way. We went to the snuff mill which had once been owned by a kinsman of Gilbert Stuart whose portraits of George Washington are often reprinted today. I would have been content with a look from the outside. There was an admission charge of fifty cents. I was dreadfully short of money, and hated to see him spend his. I knew that while he had never had the extreme ups and downs I had had, he skimped along gallantly in order to afford trips such as that to New Orleans. But he insisted. And long after, when I fully realized how little spending money HPL had, I felt guilty, just as I did concerning other trivialities, so-

called, which I might have declined, or might by didactic skill have succeeded in paying for myself, and without offending him.

We saw the Glebe, whose history he knew. I've forgotten all except the mulberries growing in front, the most luscious mulberries I've ever tasted. We decided that in view of the markedly sinister air of the locality the tastiness of the mulberries doubtless derived from their roots' dipping down into charnel crypts.

I learned finally that for years he had wanted to see the Hazard home; so we went. The place was said to have a rare and peculiar type of roof. The sight of it delighted HPL. Then daring took possession. Since we were here, we should see the interior, he proposed.

I didn't like the idea of invading a private residence, but I did not like to object. HPL took the lead. It was not until Mr. Hazard came to the door that I realized what fortitude Lovecraft had required to carry on. He was for a dreadful moment a martyr to his love of architecture and the antiquarian. He was visibly trembling, and he groped and fumbled for words. Behind that sallow, poker face was an extremely sensitive personality, appalled by the full awareness of his presumption in asking, and so near the time of the mid-day meal, for permission to inspect the home.

The Hazards, however, were gracious, setting him at ease. I think they were repaid by seeing his appreciation of, for instance, a certain newel post and baluster. He kept his sketch book in his pocket. Enough was enough. And when we left, he was in a mood to break a bottle of champagne over the radiator cap of Great Juggernaut which had carried him to this otherwise inaccessible spot.

It has often been said that HPL's revisory collaborations, which were often bodily rewrites of someone else's first drafts, earned him far less than they should have. Whether or not true, I have heard that he had at times taken a fee as little as ten percent of the proceeds! Though always short of money, he could not bring himself to the point of mercenary wrangling. The average self-styled "writer" who needs a craftsman to rewrite his incoherent blob to make it salable does seem to have an unbelievable reverence for his "idea," an infinite love of it, a conviction of

its grandeur, so that he feels exceedingly generous if the actual writer of the story gets fifty percent of the proceeds.

All of which gets me back to *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*, and HPL's hatred of typewriters. That I had transcribed his 14,000 handwritten words won me his gratitude. The story was rejected, but that autumn, while in Chicago, I called on Farnsworth Wright, who discussed the rejection and his reasons for it. He liked the story, but feared that his readers would rebel against such a long piece of fourth dimensional geometry. In the end, and because of that conversation, he did buy the story.

Then came correspondence with HPL, who was glad to hear of the sale of what had seemed a dead loss, except for the fun of writing it. "I despise debates on such crass details as the division of spoils," he wrote, as nearly as I can recollect the phrase. "Whatever you think fair will be agreeable."

I wrote saying, "You take seventy-five percent. All I supplied was the prod to set you to work. I don't deserve even the twenty-five percent I am keeping, except for this, that transcribing your hand-written copy was brutal punishment!"

The entire flavor of his letter suggested, somehow, that he usually was short-changed, and rarely if ever got as much as half the proceeds of collaborations to which he had contributed just about all the substance and story.

Thus, late in 1934, HPL and I divided the price of the story we had begun as a commemoration of our meeting in New Orleans. I was now in California; and all during 1935 and 1936, we corresponded, and we cooked up plans for a meeting out here, or for my next visit to Providence. Much of this exchange will appear in the Arkham House collection of Lovecraft letters, so that it is hardly necessary or even appropriate to quote in this sketch from any of the letters whose whimsy and humor made them such living representations of the man himself. He loved maps, and when I imported from Egypt a file of street guides to diverse cities and archeological areas, I included in the order a map of Thebes or Luxor—memory fails me. This I sent to HPL, along with a re-

production of an old map of Cairo, with all the legend in Latin. We ended by drafting plans for the policing of the archeological area, maintaining order not so much among the villagers now living on the fringe of these ancient ruins, as among those who still inhabit the tombs, the crypts, the temples, the necropolis.

"No, not Metropolitan but Necropolitan Police Force. . . ."

Then came that night in mid-March of 1937. My then wife and I were driving to Los Angeles. She had never met HPL, but during the silence and darkness of the San Joaquin Valley road, a stretch of several hundred miles, I was moved to speak of him, as I had indeed done many a time before. But this night, I was more than ordinarily in touch with my subject. Only four years had elapsed since our last meeting, yet so much had happened that it seemed to have been a very long, long time. I had in a small way "arrived," and the way had been crowded with events and people: and HPL, you remember, had been my guest when I had been writing professionally for so short a while that I had not yet become rejection slip conscious! Then came the evil days whose details are part of my story, not of HPL's, though his presence in person and his presence so frequently by mail made him a participant and partner, a morale builder when it seemed that I had every chance of being starved out.

So, driving, and in a car several sizes larger and thrice as powerful as that Great Juggernaut which had wheeled me and HPL to odd corners of Rhode Island, I thought of him and spoke of him at length and from the heart. There were others out of my past, but that drive was HPL Night.

On the day after our return I got an airmail from Harry Brobst, and one from James Ferdinand Morton, Lovecraft's kinsman, telling me that HPL had died. There had been a lag in his letters, but not such as to make me wonder about his health. And not even from his final letter did I get any intimation of how rapidly he was failing.

Twelve years have passed. Detail after detail escapes me. The over-all picture, however, is clear, and Lovecraft to me is still very much alive and real, except that he no longer writes. And my memory goes back to Providence, where we met for what was to be the last time.

There have been so many estimates of HPL as a writer. Feuds and animosities have come out of debates concerning his merits. There has been unrealistic adulation of everything he wrote, good, bad, or mediocre. I had intended to set forth my appraisal, but after a year or more of pondering, I have come to feel that such would be a waste of words. Volume XVI, pages 49A and 49B, 1946 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, under caption, "Mystery Stories," contain two references to H. P. Lovecraft, "the American fantaisiste." While mention in the *Britannica* does not constitute canonization, relatively few of this world's two billion mortals achieve such distinction.

So that disposes of an overdone subject. To me, Lovecraft the Man, the Human Being, was infinitely more important than Lovecraft the writer. And I think again of my departure from his aunt's home, early of a July morning, after a good night's sleep.

He rode with me to guide me out of town. His return afoot would be one of those solitary walks he loved so well. Or, so he told me, most plausibly. I scarcely needed a guide, and he knew this. He went his mile or two with the departing guest as a final courtesy, and I was glad that he prolonged the visit by those few moments.

There was not yet any traffic. I pulled up, finally, for him to alight. I do not remember what words we exchanged. I remember only how he stood there, by the roadside, hand raised in farewell and good luck.

Though I did not then know it, this was the last time I was ever to see Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Only the other day, I found an old highway map, and tried to deduce, from recollection that I drove on to Pelham Manor instead of to Irvington, New York, which road I took out of Providence, and where I pulled up. But time has tricked me, and all that I remember certainly is the man, and the morning quiet, and the friendliness which rode with me.

A Literary Copernicus

By FRITZ LEIBER, JR.

I

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT was the Copernicus of the horror story. He shifted the focus of supernatural dread from man and his little world and his gods, to the stars and the black and unplumbed gulfs of intergalactic space. To do this effectively, he created a new kind of horror story and new methods for telling it.

During the Middle Ages and long afterwards, the object of man's supernatural fear was the Devil, together with the legions of the damned and the hosts of the dead, earthbound and anthropomorphic creatures all. Writers as diverse as Dante and Charles Maturin, author of *Melmoth the Wanderer*, were able to rouse terror in their readers by exploiting this fear.

With the rise of scientific materialism and the decline of at least naive belief in Christian theology, the Devil's dreadfulness quickly paled. Man's supernatural fear was left without a definite object. Writers seeking to awaken supernatural fear restlessly turned to other objects, some old, some new.

Horror of the dead proved to be a somewhat harder feeling than dread of the Devil and the damned. This provided the necessary ground for the genre of the ghost story, ably exploited by Montague Rhodes James and others.

Arthur Machen briefly directed man's supernatural dread toward Pan, the satyrs, and other strange races and divinities who symbolized for him the Darwinian-Freudian "beast" in man.

Earlier, Edgar Allan Poe had focused supernatural dread on the monstrous in man and in nature. Abnormal mental and physiological states

fascinated him, as did the awesome might of the elements, natural catastrophes, and the geographic unknown.

Algernon Blackwood sought an object for horror especially in the new cults of occultism and spiritualism, with their assertion of the preternatural power of thoughts and feelings.

Meanwhile, however, a new source of literary material had come into being: the terrifyingly vast and mysterious universe revealed by the swiftly developing sciences, in particular astronomy. A universe consisting of light-years and light-millennia of black emptiness. A universe containing billions of suns, many of them presumably attended by planets housing forms of life shockingly alien to man and, likely enough in some instances, infinitely more powerful. A universe shot through with invisible forces, hitherto unsuspected by man, such as the ultraviolet ray, the X-ray—and who can say how many more? In short, a universe in which the unknown had vastly greater scope than in the little crystal-sphered globe of Aristotle and Ptolemy. And yet a real universe, attested by scientifically weighed facts, no mere nightmare of mystics.

Writers such as H. G. Wells and Jules Verne found a potent source of literary inspiration in the simple presentation of man against the background of this new universe. From their efforts arose the genre of science-fiction.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was not the first author to see in this new universe a highly suitable object for man's supernatural fear. W. H. Hodgson, Poe, Fitz-James O'Brien, and Wells too had glimpses of that possibility and made use of it in a few of their tales. But the main and systematic achievement was Lovecraft's. When he completed the body of his writings, he had firmly attached the emotion of spectral dread to such concepts as outer space, the rim of the cosmos, alien beings, unsuspected dimensions, and the conceivable universes lying outside our own space-time continuum.

Lovecraft's achievement did not come overnight. The new concept of the horror story did not spring full-grown from his mind. In his earlier tales he experimented with the Dunsanian strain and also wrote a number of effective stories in the vein of Poe, such as *The Statement of*

Randolph Carter, The Outsider, Cool Air, and The Hound. He shared Machen's horror of the human beast and expressed it in *The Lurking Fear, The Rats in the Walls, The Horror at Red Hook, and Arthur Jermy*. Though even in these briefer tales we find broad hints of the new concept: vast life-forms from earth's past in *Dagon* and a linkage of a human being's insanity with the appearance of a new star in *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*. But with *The Call of Cthulhu* the line of development becomes clearly marked, as shown by the opening sentences: "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age."

For a while Lovecraft tended to mix black magic and other traditional sources of dread with the horrors stemming purely from science's new universe. In *The Dunwich Horror* the other-dimensional creatures are thwarted by the proper incantations, while witchcraft and the new Einsteinian universe appear cheek-by-jowl in *The Dreams in the Witch-House*. But when we arrive at *The Whisperer in Darkness, At the Mountains of Madness, and The Shadow Out of Time*, we find that the extra-terrestrial entities are quite enough in themselves to awaken all our supernatural dread, without any medieval trappings whatsoever. White magic and the sign of the cross are powerless against them and only the accidents of space and time—in short, sheer chance—save humanity.

In passing, it is to be noted that Lovecraft, like Poe, was fascinated by great natural catastrophes and new scientific discoveries and explorations, as is understandable in one who chose cosmic horror for his theme. It is likely that reports of such events engendered many of his stories. *The Whisperer in Darkness* begins with the Vermont floods of 1927 and one notes other possible linkages: reports of oceanic earthquakes and

upheavals and *Dagon* and *The Call of Cthulhu*; the inundation of acres of woodland by a man-made reservoir and *The Color Out of Space*; threat of demolition of some old warehouses on South Water Street, Providence, and the poem *Brick Row*, which is dated December 7, 1929, and may have been the germ of Lovecraft's great sonnet cycle *Fungi From Yuggoth*, written between December 27, 1929, and January 4, 1930; regional decay and degeneration and *The Lurking Fear* and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*; ravages of German submarine warfare and *The Temple*; polar exploration and *At the Mountains of Madness*; discovery of the planet Pluto by C. W. Tombaugh in 1930 and *The Whisperer in Darkness*, featuring that discovery and written in the same year.

It is a great pity that Lovecraft did not live to experience the unparalleled New England hurricane of 1938, when the downtown heart of his own Providence was invaded by the sea, to the accompaniment of terrific wind and downpour. What a story that would eventually have got out of him!

II

The universe of modern science engendered a profounder horror in Lovecraft's writings than that stemming solely from its tremendous distances and its highly probable alien and powerful non-human inhabitants. For the chief reason that man fears the universe revealed by materialistic science is that it is a purposeless, soulless place. To quote Lovecraft's *The Silver Key*, man can hardly bear the realization that "the blind cosmos grinds aimlessly on from nothing to something and from something back to nothing again, neither heeding nor knowing the wishes or existence of the minds that flicker for a second now and then in the darkness."

In his personal life Lovecraft met the challenge of this hideous realization by taking refuge in traditionalism, in the cultivation of mankind's time-honored manners and myths, not because they are true, but because man's mind is habituated to them and therefore finds in them some comfort and support. Recognizing that the only meaning in the cosmos is that which man dreams into it, Lovecraft treasured beautiful human dreams, all age-worn things, and the untainted memories of childhood. This is

set forth clearly in *The Silver Key*, the story in which Lovecraft presents his personal philosophy of life.

In the main current of Lovecraft's supernatural tales, horror of the mechanistic universe gave shape to that impressive hierarchy of alien creatures and gods generally referred to as "the Cthulhu mythos," an assemblage of beings whose weird attributes reflect the universe's multitudinous environments and whose fantastic names are suggestive renderings of non-human words and sounds. They include the Elder Gods or Gods of Earth, the Other Gods or Ultimate Gods, and a variety of entities from distant times, planets, and dimensions.

Although they stem from that period in which Lovecraft mixed black magic in his tales and was attracted to Dunsanian pantheons, I believe it is a mistake to regard the beings of the Cthulhu mythos as sophisticated equivalents of the entities of Christian demonology, or to attempt to divide them into balancing Zoroastrian hierarchies of good and evil.

Most of the entities in the Cthulhu mythos are malevolent or, at best, cruelly indifferent to mankind. The perhaps benevolent Gods of Earth are never mentioned directly, except for Nodens, and gradually fade from the tales. In *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* they are pictured as relatively weak and feeble, symbols of the ultimate weakness of even mankind's traditions and dreams. It is likely that Lovecraft employed them only to explain why the more numerous malevolent entities had not long ago overrun mankind, and to provide a source of incantations whereby earthlings could to some degree defend themselves, as in *The Dunwich Horror* and *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. In the later tales, as we have mentioned, Lovecraft permitted mankind no defense, except luck, against the unknown.

In contrast to the Elder Gods, the Other Gods are presented as powerful and terrible, yet also—strange paradox!—" . . . blind, voiceless, tenebrous, mindless . . ." (*The Dream-Quest*).

Of the Other Gods, Azathoth is the supreme deity, occupying the topmost throne in the Cthulhu hierarchy. There is never any question of his being merely an alien entity from some distant planet or dimension, like Cthulhu or Yog-Sothoth. He is unquestionably "god," and also the

greatest god. Yet when we ask what sort of god, we discover that he is the blind, idiot god, “. . . the mindless daemon-sultan . . .”, “. . . the monstrous nuclear chaos. . . .”

Such a pantheon and such a chief deity can symbolize only one thing: the purposeless, mindless, yet all-powerful universe of materialistic belief.

And Nyarlathotep, the crawling chaos, is his messenger—not mindless like his master, but evilly intelligent, pictured in *The Dream-Quest* in the form of a suave pharaoh. The Nyarlathotep legend is one of Lovecraft’s most interesting creations. It appears both in the prose poem and in the sonnet of that name. In a time of widespread social upheaval and nervous tension, one looking like a pharaoh appears out of Egypt. He is worshipped by the fellahin, “wild beasts followed him and licked his hands.” He visits many lands and gives lectures with queer pseudo-scientific demonstrations, obtaining a great following—rather like Cagliostro or some similar charlatan. A progressive disintegration of man’s mind and world follows. There are purposeless panics and wanderings. Nature breaks loose. There are earthquakes, weedy cities are revealed by receding seas, an ultimate putrescence and disintegration sets in. Earth ends.

Just what does Nyarlathotep “mean”? That is, what meanings can most suitably be read into him, granting that, by him, Lovecraft may not consciously have “meant” anything. One possibility is that the pharaoh-charlatan expresses the mockery of a universe man can never understand or master. Another is that he symbolizes the blatantly commercial, self-advertising, acquisitive world that Lovecraft loathed (Nyarlathotep always has that aura of the salesman, that brash contemptuousness). Yet a third possibility is that Nyarlathotep stands for man’s self-destructive intellectuality, his awful ability to see the universe for what it is and thereby kill in himself all naive and beautiful dreams.

In this connection it is to be noted that Lovecraft, to his last month a tireless scholar and questioner, was the embodiment of the one noble feeling scientific materialism grants man: intellectual curiosity. He also expressed this passion in his supernatural tales. His protagonists are often

drawn to the unknown as much as they dread it. Quaking at the horrors that may lurk there, they yet cannot resist the urge to peer beyond the rim of space. *The Whisperer in Darkness*, perhaps his greatest story, is remarkable for the way in which the horror and fascination of the alien are equally maintained until almost the very end.

This alchemist-like yearning for "hidden knowledge" was one of the forces which led Lovecraft to create that remarkable series of imaginary but deceptively realistic "secret books," chief among them the *Necronomicon*, which are featured prominently in his later stories.

III

Lovecraft's matured method of telling a horror story was a natural consequence of the importance of the new universe of science in his writings, for it was the method of scientific realism, approaching in some of his last tales (*At the Mountains of Madness* and *The Shadow Out of Time*) the precision, objectivity, and attention to detail of a report in a scientific journal. Most of his stories are purported documents and necessarily written in the first person. This device is common in weird literature, as witness Poe's *Ms. Found in a Bottle*, Haggard's *She*, Stoker's *Dracula*, and many others, but few writers have taken it quite as seriously as did Lovecraft.

He set great store by the narrator having some vitally pressing motive for recounting his experiences, and was ingenious at devising such motives: justificatory confession in *The Thing on the Doorstep* and *The Statement of Randolph Carter*; warning, in *The Whisperer in Darkness* and *At the Mountains of Madness*; attempt by the narrator to clarify his own ideas and come to a decision, in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*; scholarly summing up a weird series of events, in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* and *The Haunter of the Dark*.

The scientifically realistic element in Lovecraft's style was a thing of slow growth in a writer early inclined to a sonorous and poetic prose with an almost Byzantine use of adjectives. The transition was never wholly completed, and like all advances, it was attended by losses and limitations. Disappointingly to some readers, who may also experience

impatience at the growing length of the stories (inevitable in scientific reports), there is notably less witchery of words in, say, *The Shadow Out of Time* than in *The Dunwich Horror*, though the former story has greater unity and technical perfection. And Lovecraft's own restricted and scholarly life hardly fitted him to be an all-over realist. He always observed a gentlemanly reserve in his writings and depicted best those types of characters which he understood and respected, such as scholars, New England farmers and townsmen, and sincere and lonely artists; while showing less sympathy (consider *He*) and penetration in the presentation of business men, intellectuals, factory workers, "toughs," and other admittedly brash, uninhibited, and often crude denizens of our modern cities.

There were three important elements in Lovecraft's style which he was able to use effectively in both his earlier poetic period and later, more objective style.

The first is the device of *confirmation* rather than revelation. (I am indebted to Henry Kuttner for this neat phrase.) In other words, the story-ending does not come as a surprise but as a final, long-anticipated "convincer." The reader knows, and is supposed to know, what is coming, but this only prepares and adds to his shivers when the narrator supplies the last and incontrovertible piece of evidence. In *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* the reader knows from almost the first page that Ward has been supplanted by Joseph Curwen, yet the narrator does not state this unequivocally until the last sentence of the book. This does not mean that Lovecraft never wrote the revelatory type of story, with its surprise ending. On the contrary, he used it in *The Lurking Fear* and handled it most effectively in *The Outsider*. But he did come more and more to favor the less startling but sometimes more impressive confirmatory type.

So closely related to his use of confirmation as to be only another aspect of it, is Lovecraft's employment of the terminal climax—that is, the story in which the high point and the final sentence coincide. Who can forget the supreme chill of: "But by God, Eliot, *it was a photograph from life,*" or "*It was his twin brother, but it looked more like the*

father than he did," or "They were, instead, the letters of our familiar alphabet, spelling out the words of the English language in my own handwriting," or ". . . the face and hands of Henry Wentworth Akeley." Use of the terminal climax made it necessary for Lovecraft to develop a special type of story-telling, in which the explanatory and return-to-equilibrium material is all deftly inserted before the finish and while the tension is still mounting. It also necessitated a very careful structure, with everything building from the first word to the last.

Lovecraft reinforced this structure with what may be called *orchestrated prose*—sentences that are repeated with a constant addition of more potent adjectives, adverbs, and phrases, just as in a symphony a melody introduced by a single woodwind is at last thundered by the whole orchestra. *The Statement of Randolph Carter* provides one of the simplest examples. In it, in order, the following phrases occur concerning the moon: ". . . waning crescent moon . . . wan, waning crescent moon . . . pallid, peering crescent moon . . . accursed waning moon. . . ." Subtler and more complex examples can be found in the longer stories.

Not only sentences, but whole sections, are sometimes repeated, with a growing cloud of atmosphere and detail. The story may first be briefly sketched, then told in part with some reservations, then related more fully as the narrator finally conquers his disinclination or repugnance toward stating the exact details of the horror he experienced.

All these stylistic elements naturally worked to make Lovecraft's stories longer and longer, with a growing complexity in the sources of horror. In *The Dreams in the Witch-House* the sources of horror are multiple: ". . . Fever—wild dreams—somnambulism—illusions of sounds—a pull toward a point in the sky—and now a suspicion of insane sleepwalking. . . ." While in *At the Mountains of Madness* there is a transition whereby the feared entities become the fearing; the author shows us horrors and then pulls back the curtain a little farther, letting us glimpse the horrors of which even the horrors are afraid!

An urge to increase the length and complexity of tales is not uncommon among the writers of horror stories. It can be compared to the drug addict's craving for larger and larger doses—and this comparison is not

fanciful, since the chief purpose of the supernatural tale is to arouse the single feeling of spectral terror in the reader rather than to delineate character or comment on life. Devotees of this genre of literature are at times able to take doses which might exhaust or sicken the average person. Each reader must decide for himself just how long a story he can stand without his sense of terror flagging. For me, all of Lovecraft, including the lengthy *At the Mountains of Madness*, can be read with ever-mounting excitement.

For it must be kept in mind that no matter how greatly Lovecraft increased the length, scope, complexity, and power of his tales, he never once lost control or gave way to the impulse to write wildly and pile one blood-curdling incident on another without the proper preparation and attention to mood. Rather, he tended to write with greater restraint, to perfect the internal coherence and logic of his stories, and often to provide alternate everyday explanations for the supernatural terrors he invoked, letting the reader infer the horror rather than see it face to face, so that most of his stories fulfill the conditions set down by the narrator of *The Whisperer in Darkness*: "Bear in mind closely that I did not see any actual visual horror at the end . . . I cannot prove even now whether I was right or wrong in my hideous inference," or by the narrator of *The Shadow Out of Time*: "There is reason to hope that my experience was wholly or partly an hallucination—for which, indeed, abundant causes existed."

IV

Strangely paralleling the development of Lovecraft's scientific realism was an apparently conflicting trend: the development of an imaginary background for his stories, including New England cities such as Arkham and Innsmouth, institutions such as Miskatonic University in Arkham, semi-secret and monstrous cults, and a growing library of "forbidden" books, such as the *Necronomicon*, containing monstrous secrets about the present, future, and past of earth and the universe.

Any writer, even a thoroughgoing realist, may invent the names of persons and places, either to avoid libel or because his creations are hy-

brid ones, combining the qualities of many persons or places. Some of Lovecraft's inventions are of a more serious sort altogether, definitely distorting the "real" world that forms the background for many of his later supernatural tales. Not only are the *Necronomicon*, the *Unausprechlichen Kulten* of von Junzt and other volumes presumed to have a real existence (in few copies and under lock and key, rather closely guarded secrets), but the astounding and somewhat theosophical tale they have to tell of non-human civilizations in earth's past and of the frightful denizens of other planets and dimensions, is taken seriously by the scholars and scientists who people Lovecraft's stories. These individuals are in all other ways very realistically minded indeed, but having glimpsed the forbidden knowledge, they are generally more susceptible to cosmic terror than ordinary people. Sober and staid realists, they yet know that they live on the brink of a horrid and ravening abyss unsuspected by ordinary folk. This knowledge does not come to them solely as the result of the weird experiences in which the stories involve them, but is part of their intellectual background.

These "awakened" scholars are chiefly on the faculty of imaginary Miskatonic University. Indeed, the fabulous history of that institution, insofar as it can be traced from Lovecraft's stories, throws an interesting light on the development of this trend in his writing.

In June 1882 a peculiar meteor fell near Arkham. Three professors from Miskatonic came to investigate and found it composed of an evanescent substance defying analysis. Despite this experience, they were highly skeptical when later on they heard of eerie changes occurring on the farm where the meteor fell and, contemptuous of what they considered folk superstitions, they stayed away during the year-long period in which a hideous decay gradually wiped out the farm and its inhabitants. In other words, they behaved as professors are conventionally supposed to behave, intolerant of ghostly events and occult theories—and certainly showing no signs of having read the *Necronomicon*, if there was a copy at Miskatonic at that date, with any sympathy. It is significant that the story in which these events occur, *The Color Out of Space*, is praised by Edmund Wilson, a generally adverse critic.

But in the course of the next twenty-five years, perhaps as an insidious result of the strange meteor fall, a change took place in Miskatonic University and in the intellectual equipment of at least some of its faculty members. For when the child prodigy Edward Pickman Derby entered Miskatonic he was able to gain access for a time to the copy of the *Necronomicon* in the library; and Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee, the political economist, during his five-year amnesia which began May 14, 1908, made indecipherable marginal notes in the same volume. Still later, a stranger who was picked up near-dead in Kingsport harbor on Christmas (in 1920, I think) was allowed to view the dread book in St. Mary's Hospital at Arkham.

During the 'twenties there was a wild, decadent set among the students (Miskatonic's lost generation, apparently), who were of dubious morality and were reputed to practise black magic. And in 1925 the *Necronomicon* was consulted yet again, this time by the uncouth and precocious giant Wilbur Whately. He sought to borrow it, but Henry Armitage, the librarian, wisely refused.

In 1927 (the year they were surveying for the new reservoir for Arkham) the talented young mathematician Walter Gilman also obtained temporary access to the volume. He came to a hideous end in a haunted rooming house, but not before he had presented to Miskatonic a queer, spiky image formed of unknown elements and later placed on display in the Miskatonic museum. It was not, however, the first unearthly accession to the museum, which also boasted some strangely alloyed and fantastically piscine gold jewelry from Innsmouth.

In the late 'twenties Asenath Waite, fascinating daughter of a reputed Innsmouth sorcerer, took a course in medieval metaphysics at Miskatonic, and we can be sure she did not lose the opportunity of prying into even more dubious branches of knowledge.

On the whole, the late 'twenties were a period particularly productive of spectral occurrences in and around Arkham; in particular the year 1928, which can in this connection be termed "The Great Year," and in even greater particular September 1928, which may be titled "The Great Month."

We can presume that the unfortunate Gilman perished that year and that Asenath Waite was one of the student body, but those presumptions are only a beginning. Consultation of the *Journal of the American Psychological Society* shows N. W. Peaslee then began to publish a series of articles describing his strange dreams of earth's non-human past. And on May sixth Albert N. Wilmarth, an instructor in literature, received a disquieting letter from the Vermont scholar Henry A. Akeley about extra-terrestrial creatures lurking in his native woodlands. In August Wilbur Whateley died horrifyingly while attempting to burglarize the Miskatonic library and steal the *Necronomicon*. On September ninth Wilbur's twin brother, who took after his non-human father to an even greater extent, broke loose near Dunwich, Massachusetts.

On September twelfth, Wilmarth, lured by a forged letter, set out to visit Akeley in Vermont. On the same day Dr. Armitage learned of the eruption of Wilbur's twin brother.

That night Wilmarth fled in horror from Akeley's farm. On the fourteenth Armitage set out for Dunwich with two of his colleagues, and next day managed to destroy the Dunwich horror.

It is startling indeed to think of two such tremendous sequences of supernatural events reaching their crisis at almost precisely the same time. One likes to think of the frantic Armitage passing the apprehensive Wilmarth as the latter hurried to catch his train. (The most obvious explanation is that Lovecraft prepared a rather elaborate chronology for *The Dunwich Horror*, written in 1928, and then made use of the same chart in laying out the plot of *The Whisperer in Darkness*, written in 1930 with no other tales intervening.)

After the excitement of The Great Month, almost any events seem anticlimactic. However, one should mention the Miskatonic Antarctic Expedition of 1930-31; the discovery of the secrets of the Witch-House in March 1931, with further accessions to the museum; and the Australian expedition of 1935. Both expeditions included Professor William Dyer of the geology department, who also knew something of Wilmarth's dreadful experience and who can perhaps therefore lay claim to having been involved in more preternatural events than anyone else on the faculty.

One can only speculate as to why Lovecraft created and made such intensive use of Miskatonic University and the *Necronomicon*. Certainly the Miskatonic faculty constitutes a kind of Lovecraftian utopia of highly intelligent, aesthetically sensitive, yet tradition-minded scholars.

As for the *Necronomicon*, it appears that Lovecraft used it as a back door or postern gate to realms of wonder and myth, the main approaches to which had been blocked off by his acceptance of the new universe of materialistic science. It permitted him to maintain in his stories at least occasional sections of the poetic, resonant, and colorful prose which he loved, but which hardly suited his later, scientifically realistic style. It provided him with a cloud of sinister atmosphere which would otherwise have had to be built afresh with each story. It pictured vividly his Copernican conception of the vastness, strangeness, and infinite eerie possibilities of the new universe of science. And finally, it was the key to a more frightening, yet more fascinating "real" world than the blind and purposeless cosmos in which he had to live his life.

Providence: Two Gentlemen Meet at Midnight

By AUGUST DERLETH

H. P. L.: Good evening, sir. We meet at last
along these streets both you and I have often passed.

E. A. P.: Indeed, we are not strangers, you and I,
for all the many times you passed me by
while you were still on that material plane
and pervious to cold and wind and rain.
I used to see you when you walked
past Helen's home, and one evening when you talked
till almost dawn with friends upon the stones
that mark more than a century of bones,
and wrote some verses with genteel comedy and some ado—
an acrostic, if I recall, a poem or two,
of which, sir—my respects—yours was quite the best.
Of your nocturnal wanderings, that evening marked a crest.

H. P. L.: Yes, I remember it—we celebrated one
who went before, who seemed of night rather than the sun.

E. A. P.: It is quite true that I
preferred the night owl's cry
to day's round. But this leaning toward the midnight air,
my friend, methinks we share.

H. P. L.: The night, sir, does for Providence and all things old
something that takes from them the chilling cold
of newness and the marks of what some poor, benighted men
incline to calling progress. Then,
too, there was for me the knowledge in this place
you would not choose a sunlit hour to show your face.

E. A. P.: True, there are some places that I would not go—
 and they grow more in number; one year it is Brick Row
 torn down, and on another a house I knew,
 but there remain to such as us a few,
 as always—Helen's home, and others on old Prospect Street,
 Benefit and College Hill—these byways knew my feet
 long ago, as once I knew familiar walls and floors
 long since away. You, too, pause at once known doors;
 there was a house on Angell Street you sought in vain
 one night, and on Barnes, at number ten, and again
 on College, number sixty-six—
 old things, old places—nothing sticks
 to us like these. I followed you another time; you went
 along the Seekonk where,
 a child, you made obeisance to ancient gods of earth and air.
 My friend, you see,
 we share a common loyalty.

H. P. L.: How long ago that was! Since then, you knew,
 others took their place—Dagon, Yog-Sothoth, Cthulhu.

E. A. P.: A host of evil, as much the terrors of the mind
 as were those older, my own kind.

H. P. L.: All that is done, sir. But here all 'round
 still stands for us a kind of hallowed ground—
 hallowed in a way for each his own,
 and neither of us in this is quite alone.

E. A. P.: The night is young, my friend,
 and there are old, enchanting paths to wend.
 A walk down Benefit, past Helen's home, past that shunned
 house of old alarm
 once you celebrated. . . . Let us forego formality.
 Come, sir, my arm!

HPL

By VINCENT STARRETT

He didn't wait for his laurel wreath,
He couldn't stop for the long applause:
Someone called from a distant heath
With urgent news of an ancient cause,
And he slipped away in the poignant pause
Between two strokes of a midnight bell . . .
I think they met him with proud hurrahs
Who led him down to the gates of Hell.

And there were they who had gone before,
To crush his fingers and speak his name,
At the cheerful Inn of the Creaking Door
With its ringing glasses and hearth aflame.
Edgar . . . Louis . . . and Arthur . . . Fame
Dubbed him Howard and hailed him peer.
We who cherish a meaner claim
Well may spare him a facile cheer.

Three thousand copies of this book have been printed from Intertype Garamond by the Collegiate Press, George Banta Publishing Company, Menasha, Wisconsin. The paper is Winnebago Eggshell. The binding cloth is Holliston Black Novelex.

